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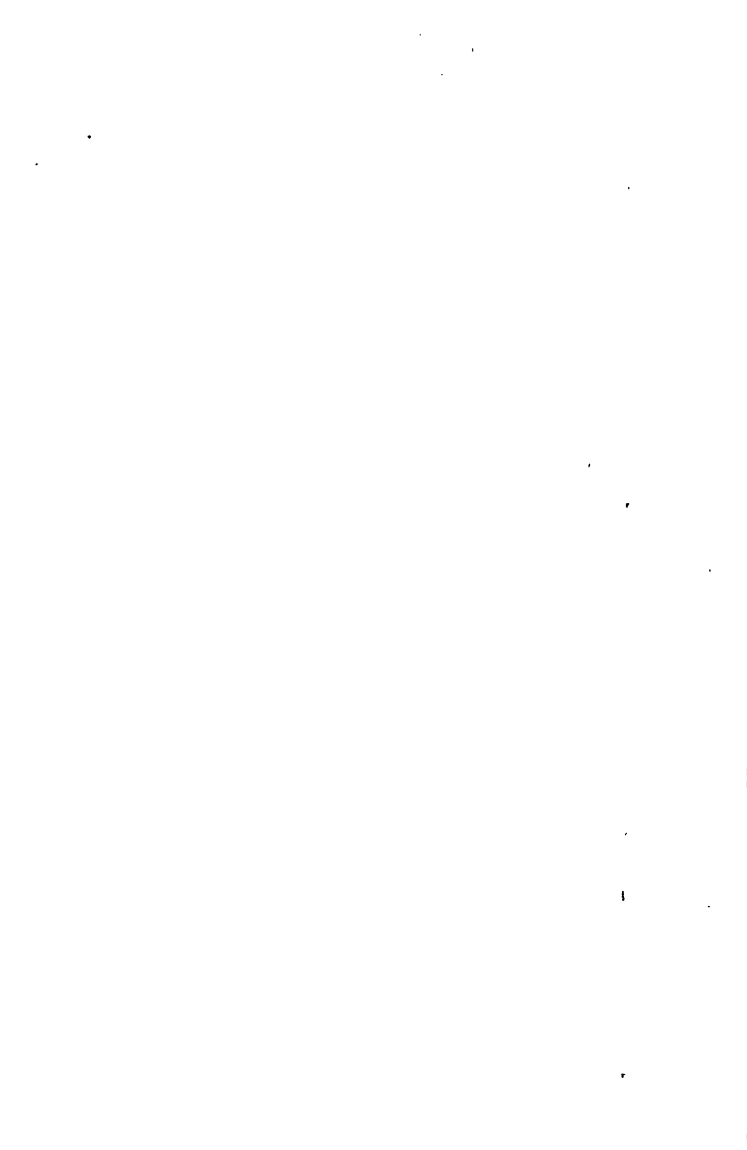
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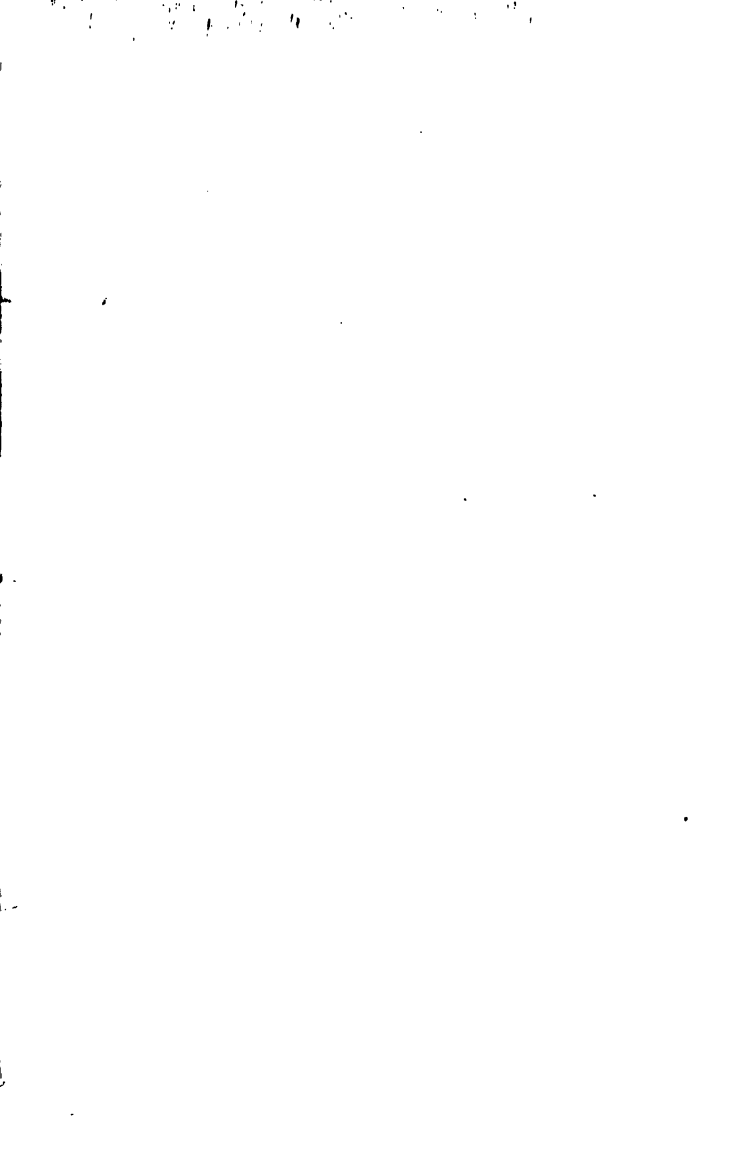


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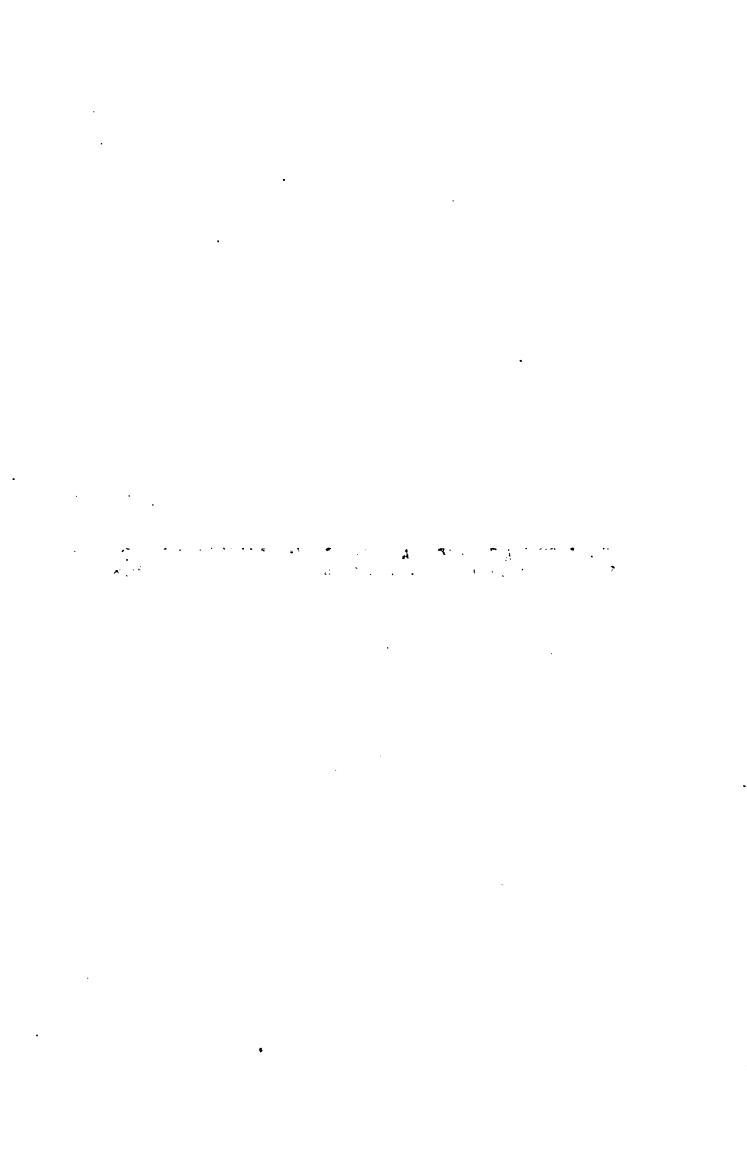
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JERUSALEM AND ITS ENVIRONS.



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JERUSALEM FROM THE NORTH WEST.

JERUSALEM AND ITS ENVIRONS;

OR,

The Holy City as it Was and Is.

BY THE

REV. W. K. TWEEDIE, D.D.,

Author of "Rivers and Lakes of the Bible," "Seed Time and Harvest,"
"The Early Church," &c., &c.

"See dis-crowned Sa-lem on her rocky throne—
Wid-ow'd, yet regal, woe her only dower;
Her hymn a dirge, her min-istry a moan,
For storied charms which Is-rahel's slaves de-liver.

Where are her olives? where her emblem palm?
Her prophet-heroes, once the world's high lords?
And where the Temple which her sons en-balm
In their deep hearts?—Down-trod by Mo-lem hordes."

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PREFACE.

JERUSALEM and the Holy Land appear to be nearly as exhaustless to the traveller as the Scriptures to the critic. In both, things new and old lie in close juxtaposition. In both, the careful student will find much to reward his scrutiny, even though it amount to toil ; and in both, he who even only skims the surface, will see much to gladden his heart, or to increase his faith. Volume upon volume may be published on the subject, and they may vary much in value, from the sketchy pages which describe a "Three Weeks' Tour," to the rich and elaborate volumes of the American Professor, Dr. Robinson. But each brings some new contribution to the cause of Syrian discovery and scriptural illustration, inasmuch that we do not know a book upon the subject that would not repay even a careful perusal.

There is one defect, however, which attaches to nearly all these publications upon Palestine. The tours which they describe were too often hurried and superficial. At a few points the remark applies even to the labours of Dr. Robinson. Wonders were but half observed, or new features were but half explored, for want of time. A steamer was waiting in some bay, and the traveller must hasten on ; or friends were impatient at some rendezvous, and precious opportunities must be lost ; or danger was dreaded, and despatch was therefore imperative. Now, such things might often be

inevitable in the circumstances which arose ; but that conceded, the Holy Land surely deserves the most leisurely survey ; it would surely still repay something more prolonged than a rapid march along the usual well-trodden routes, to be thereafter forthwith forsaken for ever. Many Scripture places yet remain to be identified, and were a protracted sojourn to be made, instead of a rapid ride, more would soon be known at once of the Capital and the Country. Some travellers have boasted that they had "done" Jerusalem in a few hours,—that is, they had seen the interior of the Church of the Sepulchre, and the exterior of the Mosque ; they had walked along the Via Dolorosa—hurried out to Gethsemane—ascended the Mount of Olives, and then nearly all was over ! It has been the same in other parts of Palestine, and, no doubt, at some places real danger demands despatch. The Land of the Book, however, will never be *all* known till travellers are free, or take time, to explore it calmly, leisurely, and long. It may be tolerably known at present, but it will become more familiar then, and each addition to our knowledge will be a new help to our faith. The solemn lessons of the Holy Land will become more impressive by being more distinct, and that Land will nobly comment upon the Book, while the Book in its turn sheds imperishable glories on the Land.

The Chapters which follow are designed to describe some of the scenes which gladden the traveller there, and in connection with these, to explain the secret of that power which Palestine exercises even over those who tread its glories in the dust. It is well called "The Land of the Book ;" but better, "The Land of the Saviour." That links it for ever to the heart of millions.

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JERUSALEM.

VOLUMES might easily be compiled from the raptures, real or fictitious, recorded by those who have visited Jerusalem, when they saw it for the first time. A single specimen may suffice for all: "As I looked," this traveller writes—"as I looked, before me, in all their glory and majesty, I beheld, magnificent in the light of the setting sun, the walls of Jerusalem. I had thought of that moment for years, in waking and in sleeping dreams. I had asked myself a hundred times 'What will you do when your weary eyes rest on these holy walls?' Sometimes I thought I should cry out aloud as did pilgrims of old, sometimes that I should kneel down on the road as did the valiant men who marched with Godfrey and with Richard; but I did neither.

"My horse stopped on the road, as if he knew that all our haste had been for this, and I murmured to myself *Deus vult*, and my eyes filled with tears, and through them I gazed at the battlements, and towers, and minarets of the city. One by one the party rode

up, and each in succession paused." All alike—some Mohammedans, a monk, some Armenians, a Jew, and some Protestants—"gazed with overflowing eyes on that spot toward which the longing hearts of so many millions of the human race turn daily with devout affection. We spoke no word aloud. One rushing wave of thought swept over all our souls."

Now, one can acquiesce in the idea that *some* kind of emotion might be common to all these wayfarers in such a case, but it could scarcely be called religious—it was mere natural excitement; and, moreover, some would be sceptical as to the reality of the whole scene. That one man or two should be found with copious tears at command in such a place would not be wonderful; but that five, at least, should all agree silently, yet in concert, to weep in such circumstances, may raise a question and a doubt. In that case the scene is got up, and must be added to the stock of apocryphal or legendary wonders which haunt and hover about Jerusalem, to the great pain of the traveller.

But whether we sympathize with such emotions to their full extent, or deem them rather the effects of fancy than of aught more enduring, there can be no doubt that the hearts of myriads do turn to that widowed city every day that passes, as the exile's heart to his home, or as the wandering prodigal turned amid his woe to his father's house. And where so much has been endured, enjoyed, and recorded, it may not be easy to impart, in any brief compass, a vivid view of the whole scene. By dwelling, however, on the salient points of the Holy City, some may be enabled to under-

stand more clearly the position of places called holy, or to enjoy more profoundly the pleasures which Jerusalem must ever impart, and impart in greatest abundance to the calmest, or most self-contained soul.

Yet it were, perhaps, superfluous to attempt a very formal description of a city which has occupied a more prominent place in history than Athens with all its arts, or Rome with all its arms; than Nineveh with all its overgrown power, or Babylon with all its nameless abominations. It is one of the marvels of Providence, that a place comparatively so limited,—politically, for the most part, so insignificant, should have helped to mould the opinions, to influence the destinies, to animate the hopes, and decide the creed of millions upon millions numberless. That city has held the throne, as it first heard the songs of David. It gave law to the East, under him and his son. It has been thrilled by the words of Isaiah; and, above all, it heard the lessons, and perpetrated the death of “Him who spoke as never man did,”—who “came to his own, and his own received him not,”—who held out his hand in mercy to save, but who was in return nailed to a tree, there to die, “the just for the unjust.” Though we were never to glance at all at more recent events connected with Jerusalem—the Roman conquests, the Crusades, and other memorable things, there is more than enough in Scripture to rivet our thoughts to that spot—to fix the mind upon the city of the Great King, as upon a home, a place with which our earliest and our latest associations, our deepest sympathies and our highest hopes, are all intimately connected. The very stones and dust

of that city are dear to us ; and though it be peeled and widowed now, that only renders our sympathy the closer, our pity the more profound.

We have referred to Athens and to Rome. But, in truth, no one would compare the memories which hover round Jerusalem with the associations connected with these cities. The actions which the Holy City has witnessed, the virtues and the vices, the divine religion and the dark superstition, the wars and the peace, the wisdom and the follies of Jerusalem, have all been unique, and have all possessed a significance such as belongs to no other city under the whole heavens. Think for an instant of its religion. "The Desire of all nations" was to proceed from that centre. The Deliverer, who was destined at length to turn wars into peace to the ends of the earth, was to come out of Zion. The maxims of that city's faith, or her creed, though local for a time, were in reality, and in destination, world-wide ; they were to expand, and flower, and bear fruit in a system which was fitted to soothe all the sorrows, to heal all the wounds, and take away the very sins of poor human nature. A marvellous nidus that ! Infinite germ, first of truth and then of blessedness ! Jerusalem on earth becomes the type of the Jerusalem that is above ; and the city of our God, the capital of the heavenly Canaan, derives one of its most easily comprehended titles from the city of the Jews. It is called the New Jerusalem, and the mother of us all.

Seeing, then, that even in the eternal world this place is in one sense to be perpetuated for ever, our present object is to furnish a brief description of some of

the remarkable spots in the Holy City and around it. Approaching from the north-west, the traveller from Jaffa, or Joppa, the sea-port of Jerusalem, reaches the city over the mountains of Benjamin, up many rugged wadies, and amid many silent, sad remains of the land as it was once. Ascent after ascent is climbed, sometimes, as we have seen, with intense excitement or suspense; and it often happens that only after both the mind and the body have been jaded, is the eye regaled with the sight of Jerusalem on its throne of rock, walled all round, begirt by deep valleys, and marked out as the site of a stronghold as much as Ehrenbreitstein, or any other fortress on the margin of the Rhine. Nor should we forget that though it stands but a few leagues from the sea, the rocks which Jerusalem crowns are nearly as high above the ocean as the highest land in England. Nebi Samuel, in the environs, is 2649 feet, the Mount of Olives is 2398 feet, and the city itself 2200 feet above the level of the sea. The highest point in England is about 3100 feet.

The prominence of Mohammedan buildings, the mosques, minarets, and crescents, may at first grate harshly on the feelings of a Christian; but, having calmed his disappointment, he can at length scrutinize the city and its environs from the north-west approach. Immediately in front of him is the city itself. If he enter from the north by the Damascus Gate, Acra and Mount Zion are there; the former in front of him, the latter a little to his right. To the east is Mount Moriah, once crowned by the Temple of the living God, the praise of the whole earth, but now by what is termed the Mosque

of Omar, the abomination of desolation which has occupied the holy place for many generations. On the north-east lies Bezetha, the fourth of the hills or undulations which form the site of the city; and, without dwelling here upon minute details, these four eminences, (which, however, like everything connected with Jerusalem, have given rise to much antiquarian debate,) may suffice to convey an idea of the four general compartments of Jerusalem and its buildings. Acra, we repeat, forms the north-west section; and Bezetha, with its sparse houses, and somewhat' modern aspect, the north-east. Mount Moriah is near the centre on the east side; while on the south, Mount Zion, which is still reputed the highest in the city, rises conspicuous, though not so prominent as of old.

But few can spend a single hour in Jerusalem without glancing at least at the green slopes of the Mount of Olives, or the modern Jebel-et-Tur. Though its height varies as given by different visitors, it may be stated at 2398 feet above the level of the sea, and about 200 higher than the highest point of Mount Zion. The traveller may be haunted by sceptical thoughts regarding not a few of the places pointed out to his notice within the city, while many he cannot but reject with some degree of indignation, at what he feels to be an attempted imposition. But regarding the Mount of Olives, apart from the legends which are linked to it, all is genuine and true. There it stands as it stood of old, when David climbed it, "weeping and barefoot," because an unnatural rebellion drove him from Jerusalem. These slopes the Saviour, David's son and

Lord, often crossed on his way to Bethany. Under olive trees, the predecessors, perhaps, of some which still linger there, though in diminished number, he uttered some of his most emphatic lessons; and there no man, whose heart has been touched by the love of the Redeemer, can wander without thinking first, last, and evermore of Him "whom, having not seen, we love." Here the tie is drawn closer between him and the soul; for thence he returned to his God and our God, his Father and our Father, enticing our hearts glory-ward after him as he went. This invests the Mount with charms which do not belong even to Lebanon, to Tabor, or to Hermon; and all the lying wonders which crowd around Olivet at the bidding of a blind superstition can scarcely diminish its attractions.

If the traveller can stay his eyes from gazing on the desolate city, or is not anxious without delay to explore the interior, the view from the northern slopes, near the summit, may include the distant hills of Moab, to the east of the Dead Sea, as that sea itself is partly visible from some places on the Mount, depressed as is the bed in which the sullen waters lie. These mountains carry us back in thought to the earliest times of the Hebrews, their wars and contendings, their victories, their sins and defeats. Under the shadow of these very hills thousands were swept into sudden and unhonoured graves, because of the gross trespass of Baal-peor, (Num. xxv.) And in this manner our very first glimpse of Jerusalem shows—first, its extent from north to south, and from east to west; secondly, its environs, especially to the north and the east; and

thirdly, we read the humbling fact, that the city is indeed trodden down of the Gentiles,—it is withered, like its emblem, the blighted fig-tree, compared with the glory which once encircled and enshrined it. Extract from the Bible the passages which relate to Jerusalem, and how fragmentary would even that book become! Yet there stands that Jerusalem, now weary and wasted, the skeleton of itself—a monument once of the goodness, but now of the severity of God.

And on the slopes of this Mount some have, for the first time, felt surprised at the limited dimensions of the Holy Land. Its power and its place in history—the halo which surrounds it, and the countless associations to which it gives rise—all foster the idea that that land is magnificent—that its fields are ample—its mountains majestic—its limits wide-spread. But one is not long in Palestine without being disabused in this respect—the impression gradually vanishes away. The country is still a “delightful land.” Its Jordan alone would render it conspicuous. But in proportion as the narrow, strip-like appearance of the country becomes known, the wonder grows, that the men of so small a territory were able to achieve such feats—that a country so limited has produced effects greater, wider, deeper, and more lasting than the most famed of the old kingdoms. It is another proof that God was among the Hebrews of a truth.

After what has been said, no attempt need be made to record the first impressions of a devout visitor at the sight of Jerusalem. There are thoughts which lie too deep for words. It often happens that we cannot

"wreak ourselves upon expression," and this is an instance. If, however, we glance once more, and ever so briefly, at some of the eventful scenes which that city has witnessed, the deep foundation of our interest in Jerusalem will at once be laid bare. After the time of Solomon, for example, it was now blessed with good kings, and then blighted by bad ones. God was there as the King of all kings, and the city prospered under the one class, as surely as it was desolated or drenched in blood under the other. Under Rehoboam, for instance, it was taken and pillaged by the king of Egypt (2 Chron. xii. 9); for Rehoboam was one of the men who feared not God. Under Amaziah, again, the city was taken by Jehoash, king of Israel—that is, of the revolted tribes—when the Temple was robbed of its gold and silver, and a great part of the city defences thrown down (2 Kings xiv. 13, 14). Oscillating thus in its fortunes according to the character of its rulers, the house of the Lord was alternately defiled by wicked kings and expurgated by devout ones. At length, when the cup of iniquity could hold no more, Nebuchadnezzar came. He besieged Jerusalem for three years. Its walls were razed. Its palaces were given to the fire. Its gold and silver were seized by the captor; and its people, like water emptied from vessel to vessel, were carried away to a heathen and a hated land.

Now these mere glimpses of what took place in that remarkable city reveal to us plainly that the great Moral Governor was there of a truth, and invest the place with the sacredness that belongs to the abode of a present God. Asserting his prerogative, he has

there a thousand times proclaimed that signal wickedness shall lead to signal suffering ; and when we walk the streets, or gaze upon the piled-up ruins of the places where such things have happened, we feel at once why it is that men's hearts cling, in love or else in superstition, to that lonely city. The mighty works of God have there been wrought, and the proofs of a present Omnipotence seem to cluster round the place. Men of every clime and every hue, from north, south, east, and west, find that the centre of their strongest affections. It is not true that "the place becomes religion ;" but it is true that "the heart runs over" with feelings which words cannot tell.

THE MOUNT OF OLIVES,

We have already seen, rises to the east of the city of Jerusalem. It is separated from the rock on which the eastern ramparts are built by the deep ravine or valley of Jehoshaphat. Its slopes are studded here and there with the tree which gives its best known name to the elevation, with fig-trees, and some other Oriental productions ; and all its haunts, from the Garden of Gethsemane, and the dry bed of the brook Kidron at its base, to the buildings which crown the summit, are indissolubly associated, by religion and truth, or else by superstition and fiction, with the Redeemer's life, his sufferings, his agony, and death.

But the view upon the city which can be enjoyed from the summit or the slopes of Olivet, is what first attracts the visitor there ; and nearly every traveller

deems it a sacred duty to expatiate upon that prospect. It so completely commands the city, that all the public buildings, the streets, and many of the private houses, can be individualized. When the Temple stood there in its inexpressible beauty, all its courts, and even the minute details of its decorations, could be traced from Olivet; and now that the Mosque of Omar has supplanted the rightful occupant of the place, it also can be explored by the visitor's eye. The ground on which the city is built slopes toward the Mount, or from north-west to about east; and this gives great facility to trace the whole details. Passing over the apocryphal Tomb of the Virgin in the valley below, as well as other places whose names suggest suspicions, the eye rests on the Mosque in the foreground,—the great central object of the scene, and sufficiently imposing, could we forget the design of the structure, or the system of bigotry and bloodshed which it represents. That building and its enclosures are said to occupy about an eighth part of the entire modern city, and is acknowledged, even by those who resent its presence there, to be the grand decoration of Jerusalem.

To the observer's left of that pile, with its gardens and outworks, lies Mount Zion; and the chief building there is an Armenian Convent; beyond which the Citadel and the Tower of Hippicus appear on the right, or not far from the Jaffa Gate. That tower most probably connects us with the days of Herod and the ancient fortifications of Jerusalem, though this also has originated debate upon debate. Further away from the observer, or in the north-west angle of the modern city, is the

Latin Convent, occupying part of the mount or undulating ground called Acra. And, finally, on the north-east lies the plateau of Bezetha—not much occupied by houses, yet within the walls, and clothed at some places with olive trees and Oriental plants. Nearer the centre of the city the eye rests on the reputed Holy Sepulchre; and though it were perhaps safest and simplest to regard all the traditions connected with it as baseless and fallacious, its name suggests associations which the holiest mind will most readily indulge, and most profoundly enjoy. While enjoying them, however, one is sadly recalled from his meditation by the mosques and minarets, already referred to, which rise up in numerous parts of the city. They are to Jerusalem what the cypress is to the trees of the garden.

But such a superficial glance can scarcely satisfy either the eye or the mind as we gaze upon the city of the Great King from the western slope of Olivet. Though we were to discard at once and for ever all the idle legends and traditions which superstition and ignorance have linked to the place, one would still feel the force of those events which that city has witnessed, or of the truth which it has heard—things which neither superstition can efface nor ignorance permanently corrupt. From the Redeemer's youthful discussion with the Jewish doctors till the hour of agony when he died, or the hour of triumph when he led out his disciples as far as Bethany, where the heavens were cleft to receive him back to glory,—what scenes of joy and sorrow, of real conquest, yet apparent defeat, have been witnessed within these walls! Men tell us of "decisive battles;"

and fifteen or twenty encounters are recorded in the world's history * which very largely affected the destiny of the nations. But what battle, what fifteen battles can for a moment be compared with the moral struggle carried on within that enclosure of walls about eighteen hundred and fifty years ago? There weakness united to Omnipotence engaged in a life-and-death struggle with all the enemies of God and of man. There the God of heaven was manifested in the flesh, that the god of this world might be cast out. There the extremes of goodness and of guilt, heavenly goodness, hellish guilt, came into deadly collision. The sun and the moon on which we now gaze, the city which is spread out in its calm and desolate loneliness below us, though in far other circumstances then, and the hill on whose slopes we now recline, have all witnessed scenes and sights which involve or embody the redemption of a multitude whom no man can number. With the Bible open before us, we seem to behold them now; and at the sight of all this, well might the old monk sing, as one has quoted and translated him,—

"O mea, spes mea! tu Syon aurea, clarior auro!

O bona patria, num tua prœmia plena tenebo?"

"O holy Zion, centre of my hope!

More bright to me than miser's hoarded gold,
My heart's own home, wilt thou thy portals ope,
And to these eyes thy rich rewards unfold?"

Yet nowhere is the truth more completely verified that distance lends enchantment to the view. For a little we

* See Creasy's *Decisive Battles*.

might forget, as we gaze from the summit of Olivet, that Jerusalem is now trodden down ; but a hundred things speedily recall the remembrance. Even the trees and the foliage, with the seared and withered fields, appear, at most seasons, to tell of decay. Along the flanks of the Mount, and down into the Valley of Jehoshaphat, olive-trees are somewhat numerous, and fig-trees are also seen. Some suppose that they are now much the same in number and appearance as they were eighteen centuries ago. But no one could call the prospect rich, or even pleasing ; it is rather at some seasons withered and parched, and everything in sight is either sacred association or saddening disappointment. The mind may be stirred up to feigned and spurious raptures ; but the feeling which must commonly arise, and that with the quickness of instinct, is one of melancholy and depression, tending to tears.

There is both a mosque and a church on the summit of Olivet, and near them is a village occupied by Arabs ; but the eye wanders, not unpleased, away to the Dead Sea and the Jordan, as they are seen at the distance of about twenty miles from the crest of the Mount. The mountains which run north and south from that sea, bound the view in these directions ; and there, as in a hundred other spots in this unique land, the eye is arrested as it passes from object to object, each of them a history—each of them related, in some form, to the great work of man's redemption, or the revelation of God most high. This is the marvel of Palestine. Not its lakes—not its river—not its brooks—not its ruins—neither Carmel, nor Hermon, not even Lebanon,—but

the fact that amid these scenes the Son of man, the Son of God, wrought out the redemption of his Church. At the thought, the head is bent in lowly reverence : the believing heart is filled with mingled awe, and love, and wonder.

The village mentioned above as crowning the summit of the Mount is a small collection of dirty houses. The mosque and its minaret are, of course, for the adherents of Islam ; the Church of the Ascension is for the friends of superstition. On the highest point of the hill there is an octagonal enclosure round a small building of the same form. In the floor an aperture allows the visitor to see the natural rock, and in it the alleged impress of the Redeemer's foot, left just as he re-ascended to glory. This is a Mohammedan relic, at least a Mohammedan shows it ; and we learn, beside that clumsy imposture, that Oriental and Western, Greek and Romanist, are alike the victims of delusion when they swerve from the simple word of God.

But it is refreshing to turn from such lying wonders to ascend the minaret, and from the summit to gaze upon the country of the Saviour, again spread out beneath the eye. From the Mediterranean on the west to the Dead Sea and the mountains of Moab on the east—from the land of the Philistines along the sea-board, to the Ghor, and the Plains of Jericho—all can be surveyed ; and again, as one gazes, he wonders that a country so circumscribed and speck-like should have exercised an influence so potent over the destinies of man. This explains, in one of its aspects, the inborn pride of the children of Abraham,—that from

that strip influences should have gone forth which are pulsing still among the nations of the earth. It has been said of Cana of Galilee that it is more intimately associated with the affections of men than any spot on the face of the earth. That is because of the references often made to it in the marriage rite; for in that retired village, now hastening to ruins, Jesus consecrated wedded life by his presence and his power. There is truth in the saying; but in principle the remark applies to many a village, and city, and scene, in this land of the Bible. Incidents which bear upon the everlasting felicity of man have occurred throughout the whole. Prophets, apostles, and the Redeemer have all thrown around it that charm which even Moslem fanaticism or Papal superstition cannot destroy.

The base of Mount Olivet is skirted by monuments of various kinds, many of which are curious, though those which are named are nearly all fictitious. The Tombs of the Prophets, of Jehoshaphat, of Absalom, and Zechariah—all so called—are among them. The Mount of Offence is also in the vicinity, the scene of Solomon's idolatries, when his heathen wives corrupted his ways, and led him to import the abominations of Egypt into the Land of Promise. But it would not be easy even to catalogue all that is to be witnessed here. Many centuries and many generations seem to meet and cluster round Mount Olivet; and surely if a celebrated moralist could call that a frigid philosophy which forbade men to glow with patriotic ardour at Marathon and Thermopylæ, much more might we wonder if any heart were cold or any faith not strengthened amid the sights

and associations which meet us here. Were it only the Saviour's frequent passage over the southern slopes of Mount Olivet, to reach the home of Lazarus, and Martha, and Mary, at Bethany, that would be enough. It would suffice to consecrate the whole vicinity in the mind of that man who knows Jesus to be what he was when on earth,—the Infinite united to the finite—Omnipotence in alliance with weakness—at once the Son of God and the Saviour of the sons of men.

We have said that the outspread attractions beheld from Olivet fix many a visitor to the spot. It is the first and the last in a visit to Jerusalem. Yet these words require some modification. To a meditative mind, the view of the city is inexpressibly melancholy; and one has recorded that there is no such thing as cheerfulness about it, even on a sunny spring day. It is a mass of old stone houses, cold, sombre, and sad, presenting only blank walls to the streets, and many of them in ruins. Not more than half the space enclosed by the walls is built upon. Thickets of prickly pear and weeds, with gardens, occupy the rest. The whole of Mount Moriah, nearly the half of Mount Zion, and other portions, are either open courts or desolate and deserted places. Except on Mount Zion, and a coffee-shop near the Jaffa Gate, there is not a single house outside the gates. Then the country in the vicinity of Jerusalem, El Kuds, or The Holy, appears to be blighted, at least at seasons, as if the curse of God were on it. Bare rocks are everywhere visible. The wadies around furnish but scanty herbage for meagre goats, still scantier crops, and rarely any streams; and even the

Bedawin who live, or at least prowl there, would have to wage perpetual war with famine, were they not accustomed to the most meagre and the coarsest fare. Did we not know that this is in very deed the land which the Lord had blessed, and which had once flowed with milk and honey at his bidding, it would be difficult to divine where the abundance of Judah could be found except by repeating the miracle of the manna. Such are the thoughts which have actuated some as they gazed from the crest of Olivet—all seemed blighted and sere.

Sad and suggestive, however, as all this may be, there is one topic upon which all visitors to the Holy Land seem absolutely at one—the attractions of this Mount itself. We submit one concluding extract as a specimen of hundreds:—"Again, and yet again, we walked that mountain path to Bethany, and gathered flowers along its sides to be life-long memorials. It was there that He talked with his disciples; there the fig-tree withered at his command; it was on that path that he mounted the ass, and rode triumphant into the city amid the acclamations of the people—the very people, perhaps, who a few days later shouted, 'Crucify him!' It was somewhere along that path that he led the disciples when the bending heavens opened to receive him, and the angels conducted him to his great white throne." Such are the facts settled without controversy; why, then, appeal to poor and shadowy tradition for other and questionable attractions? Nay, amid these sacred scenes, let us adhere to the unadorned loveliness of *nature*, as in redemption we

cling to the power of grace, free, sovereign, and omnipotent. It is thus that in our walks about Jerusalem we are at once gladdened by the remembrance of glories past, and enabled to anticipate the more transcendent glories that are to come. The gloom of this poor Jerusalem is relieved by the glories of the Jerusalem which is above.

THE GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE.

This is, perhaps, the most interesting spot of all that the traveller can visit ; and, happily, its general position is one of the least questionable about Jerusalem. He will perhaps leave the city by the Jaffa Gate, although in ancient times some of the other gates would have been more convenient, and soon reaches the bed of "the brook Cedron," which, though commonly dry, is crossed by a bridge. Near that bridge, and a little to the right, is the alleged site of the Garden of Gethsemane. It is 30 or 40 feet higher than the brook, from which the north-west corner of the enclosure is distant about 145 feet. The western wall which now encloses it extends to about 160 feet in length, and that on the north to 150. Within that enclosure there are eight olive-trees, obviously of uncommon antiquity, even for the long-lived olive. Stones are piled up around the trunks, for safety or for strength ; and one cannot approach the place without a feeling that perhaps only a generation or two, according to the length of a generation among such trees, may separate these gnarled stems from the days of Jesus of Nazareth.

Though a cautious scepticism suggests that there is nothing to lead to an absolute decision of the question, "Is this the very Gethsemane?" and though it is said by some that at other places in the neighbourhood there are olive-trees as ancient, and places as likely; yet it must have been *hereabout* that the events took place which render the whole region solemn till the hour when all shall be wrapt in its winding-sheet of fire.

Yet Gethsemane is in itself a plain, prosaic garden. It is now laid out in stiff and unseemly flower-beds, where the borders are formed by rows of lavender, which at seasons load the air with their odours. There are fourteen Stations marked within the enclosure, as places for prayer or superstition, and each of these is alleged to indicate a spot signalized by the incidents of that memorable evening which made Gethsemane what it must ever be—next to the Cross, a scene for solemn impressions to the sons of men. The precise spot is indicated where Judas exclaimed, "Hail, master, and kissed him;" and a path in the enclosure is marked off from the rest, because it was pressed by the feet of the traitor. But, in such a neighbourhood, the devout mind declines such legendary lore, and clings to the great whole. The grotto of the agony, that of the bloody sweat, and similar fantastic inventions, are all discarded; for on no principles but those of Popery can the false and the pretentious ever be asked to favour the true. There may, indeed, be falsehood in sentiment as well as in tradition. When a man visits Gethsemane, and comes back to tell us that he could hear

the heavy, the slow, and solemn beating of his heart amid the stillness of the garden, we become sceptical about a narrative which is at once so weak and so exaggerated. Yet where on earth, if not on Calvary (were it known), or in Gethsemane, can external nature help to place us in close communion with the Lord of all? Where can faith more nearly pass into sight? Where can we more profoundly feel the force of the wish of him who desired to touch and to handle the wounds of his Redeemer?

One willingly surrenders himself, then, to the impressions of the place. It *may* be true that this spot was selected for the garden only in the days of the Empress Helena, or about the year 326; it may admit of proof that antiquity is not in absolute harmony with itself upon the subject—one author placing the spot at which Judas betrayed his Master in the Valley of Jehoshaphat, and others on the slopes or at the base of Olivet;—but as the sacred narrative unquestionably points to *this vicinity*, we sit down here, with the Bible open before us, as it should habitually be in the Holy Land; and with it for our guide-book, we try to drink in the lessons which the scene may help to deepen, while the word imparts them.*

On this subject John says, "Jesus went forth over

* Though we have expressed a willingness to be convinced that it was *in this vicinity* that the garden stood of old, it is right to add, that some of the most indefatigable explorers of the region, are more than sceptical. Dr. Thomson, for example, in "The Land and the Book," rejects this site. The Greeks have selected a rival garden, and the author just named deems both parties wrong. The site is too near the city, he says, and not sufficiently retired. He therefore points to a spot several hundred yards to the north-east of the present Gethsemane.

the brook Cedron, where was a garden." Luke says, "He went, as he was wont, to the Mount of Olives." Here, therefore, he sought a retreat when the hour and the power of darkness came. Here his "soul was exceeding sorrowful, even unto death." Here he retired to some distance, even from his chosen disciples, to cast himself once, again, and again on the tenderness of the Father. Here he embodied, in his utmost extremity, the spirit of his own profoundly simple prayer, "Thy will be done on earth, as it is done in heaven." Here he found that his disciples could not watch with him one hour, and yet here he kindly excused the apparent indifference, saying, "The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." Here, also, the Redeemer, in his strong agony, saw the officers, led on by Judas, hunting him out with torches, as if he had been a fugitive from justice, amid the foliage of the place, their swords and their armour gleaming in the light of the full moon, or of the lanterns which they bore. Here the traitor's kiss pointed out the Lamb for the slaughter; and here was uttered that mildest of all rebukes, "Betrayest thou the son of man with a kiss?"

Moreover, here one of the Saviour's disciples smote off the ear of the high priest's servant with a sword; but here Jesus healed that wound, and restored the member, because that action was opposed to the spirit of his religion. Here an angel appeared to Jesus, to strengthen him. Here, at his mere word, those who came to seize him fell on the ground; and here they seized him after all, bound him, and led him away. Here all the disciples forsook him and fled. Here, in

short, scenes of profoundest interest were witnessed, and sorrows of unmatched depth were endured. Were Calvary known, we repeat, and could we describe all that was suffered there by Him who endured such contradiction of sinners, we might find some spot that would rival Gethsemane in interest; but as the "place called Calvary" is hopelessly unknown, this is the foremost spot on earth, for the closeness of its connection with the Man of Sorrows and the Prince of Peace—with Him who resisted unto blood, that sinners might live for ever. Even now, it is scarcely a fancy for the solitary traveller, as he meditates at Gethsemane, to think that he still hears the words, "O my Father! if this cup may not pass from me except I drink it, thy will be done."

The city is near at hand: the walls almost overhang the garden, and it is not difficult to go back in thought to that night, so full of future woe and future glory, and study the demeanour of the myriads whom these walls enclosed eighteen centuries ago. Busy with their cares, their pleasures, their plans, or their revenge, they heeded not the Saviour, or thought only of his death. But where is he now,—and where are they? Where is Pontius Pilate? Where is the high priest of the day? Where is Judas? Where the soldiers that seized him? At the thought, one is prompted to exclaim, "O that men were wise!" He that travelled in the greatness of his strength was then in his sore agony; and those whom he loved so well were rushing upon ruin. He had wept over their coming woe, and given to earth glimpses of the fathomless compassion of Heaven. Ho

is now in deeper anguish still than when he shed those tears; for he is engaged in a death-struggle with that holy law whose demands he had lived to meet, and whose penalty he was dying to exhaust. But even the people—"his own"—were heedless of his sorrows; revelry proceeded without a check. Religion without God, and worship without the heart, were all they had. And oh, how often since that night has that scene been repeated, in regard to the members of Christ, of whom he speaks as one with himself! The world has rejoiced while the children of God were perishing in the persecutor's grasp; that is, as the Master was, so have the servants been. Gethsemane with all its anguish was to him the vestibule of heaven; to them, the rack, the fire, the wild beast, the inquisition, the axe, have been the prelude to glory; and under the shade of these hoary olive-trees, which could tell us tales of perhaps a thousand years ago, one can thus behold in its germ the entire history of the Church on earth—the bulrush ark on the water—the bush in the flames again—the lily among thorns—the Lamb's bride exposed to the malice of those who here compassed the death of the Lamb himself.

Amid the silence and solitude of this garden by moonlight, one can profoundly realize the connection which knits things seen and temporal to things unseen and eternal. Jesus could look on heaven as his home, his own native land: we were once strangers and foreigners there, but in him may be naturalized. Perhaps in this very enclosure, certainly in this vicinity, amid his agony, flashes of the glory of his home were

granted, to animate and sustain him; and have not we also, in our Gethsemanes, foreshadowings and foretastes of the glory that is coming?

"All is not woe; there are bright gleams of bliss
To cheer the pilgrim as he climbs the steep;
And if those gleams presage eternal peace,
Why o'er our sorrows droop, or weakly weep?"

Nay, when sorrows threaten to exhaust, visit Gethsemane, and find what will be refreshing as cold water to the thirsty soul. When friends prove false as Judas did, or forsake us and flee, as "all the disciples" fled from Jesus, we may hasten just the more quickly to Gethsemane, to see the Man of Sorrows suffering there, but suffering that we might triumph and rejoice.

"The Garden of the Agony" is now the property of a Franciscan convent, and its owners guard the grassless, sometimes flowerless, enclosure with some care. Their motives are two-fold. Superstition, of course, is one, and avarice the other. The name Gethsemane is understood to mean "the oil-press;" and whether for the produce of the trees, or the *douceurs* of visitors, the spot is prized. Young trees are carefully planted, to supply the place of those which are decaying; yet the present loneliness and desertion, and the scarred appearance of the scene, all harmonize well with the associations and the thoughts to which it gives rise. One would be pained and repelled by the sight of aught gairish there.

The monks and Chateaubriand, their encomiast, believe that the existing olive-trees are the identical plants which witnessed the Saviour's agony. But it is

enough to have mentioned such a supposition. Stanley more discreetly says, that these trees will remain, as long as their already protracted life is spared, the most venerable of their race on the face of the earth; their gnarled trunks and scanty foliage will always be regarded as the most affecting of the sacred memorials in or about Jerusalem. Here, if anywhere, there are tongues in the trees; and their utterance is one of mingled joy and sorrow.

MOUNT MORIAH.

It has already been noticed that Mount Moriah, on the east side of Jerusalem, was formerly crowned with the Temple of Solomon (2 Chron. iii. 1). From the Mount of Olives, the Mosque of Omar can now be explored by the eye, as the Temple was of old; and we know that it was when gazing on the Mount from Olivet that the Saviour pronounced some of his most startling predictions over Jerusalem.

Moriah is first mentioned in the Bible in connection with the sacrifice of Isaac (Gen. xxii. 1, 2). It was then an unpeopled region, and we know that a thicket grew upon the spot. Long subsequent to that period Moriah still preserved its rural character; for Araunah the Jebusite had a threshing-floor there, which he gave to David as a site for an altar to his God (2 Sam. xxiv. 15-25). When the Temple was erected, the Jews believed that the altar of burnt-offering stood precisely on the spot where Abraham placed his altar. Solomon connected Mount Zion, which lies to the south-west, with

Moriah, by a stupendous causeway which led from his palace to the Temple. At present, however, Moriah is scarcely to be distinguished from Mount Zion, except by antiquarian eyes. The intervening valley has been much filled up, so that the two eminences appear to be now nearly one, though no changes of time can ever obliterate the associations of the past and the anticipations of the future, connected with Moriah, its Temple, and its God.

To show how far the old land-marks of the city have been effaced by the lapse of time and the ravages of war, it may be mentioned that when a Protestant church was about to be erected on Mount Zion, not less than fifty feet of rubbish and debris had to be cleared away before a firm foundation could be found. To fix with absolute certainty the exact spot of some events which happened in Jerusalem, is, consequently, in many cases utterly impossible; and few would attempt it unless they were first blinded, and then impelled by superstition. Standing by the Tarpeian Rock, above the Roman Forum, one is doubtful for a time whether such a paltry eminence could ever be employed for the purposes to which it was sometimes applied. But when we descend into the Forum, and see the fathoms deep of rubbish piled upon it, the doubts disappear. Now, Jerusalem has been yet more frequently sacked, burned, and razed than Rome, and the piles of rubbish heaped over a great part of its area should make us wary as to alleged historical spots, except where the nature of the ground makes change impossible,—as at the Pool of Siloam, the Mount of Olives, and some other places. It may guide

us, however, amid numerous sources of difficulty, to remember, that the hills of Zion, of Akra, of Moriah, and Bezetha, according to the opinions of most of those who have visited Jerusalem, can still be traced as of old. The brook Kidron cannot be mistaken; the Valley of Hinnom could not be effaced except by some earthquake convulsion: and thus, while we walk about Zion, or tell her towers, much may be learned at once to establish and explain the word of God.

Few can resort to Moriah, or scan it from the slope of Olivet, without being reminded that it is one of the spots where earth and heaven have met, or where it was made plain that God did not abandon man, when man had forsaken God. Nay, on this Mount one of the most wonderful manifestations was made regarding the promised Deliverer,—his sacrifice, and his return to life. For an age when men were taught religion rather by what they saw than by what they heard,—by pictorial representation rather than by vocal utterances,—no one can over-estimate the meaning of Abraham's act in his willingness to offer Isaac on this Mount. The spirit in which it was done, the antecedents, the accompaniments and results of the deed, all proclaim that this was the finger of God; and while we are thereby pointed forward to the Lamb of God, the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, Jerusalem becomes more and more sacred in a good man's eyes. True, that Mount is for the present all trodden down; it is profaned by the rites of Islam. No one dare explore it except at the risk of his life. But

that will not be for ever, and, meanwhile, even in its sad desecration, the place is dear. The dawn of its emancipation from the Turk, moreover, approaches. The sacred precincts have lately been explored again and again, in a way that would perhaps have ended in death half a century ago.

It is but right to add here, that some doubt whether *this* Moriah be that of Abraham. There *are* difficulties connected with the question the moment it is raised. Yet, if this must be denied, what may be believed? The Moslem enclosure, called Haram, or the holy, and Haram-esh-Sherif, "the noble sanctuary," is generally believed to occupy the site, and we do not see *sufficient* reason for disturbing the belief. Its extent, 1500 feet by 1050, may seem too ample to have been a threshing-floor; and the stately cloisters, the alleys of trees, the Mosque El-Aksa, and other things, may countenance a surmise; but, superstition all apart, we see no valid reason for denying that the "Dome of the Rock" is the real Moriah.

THE GATES OF JERUSALEM.

In all ancient cities, from Thebes and Troy to Rome, the gates have been objects of prime importance. Those of Jerusalem were numerous, but it is not easy to acquire exact information regarding them. On the north side there stood the Old Gate (Neh. iii. 6); the Gate of Ephraim, or Benjamin (Jer. xxxviii. 7); and the Corner Gate. On the west side, the Valley Gate appears to be placed; while on the south were the

Dung Gate (Neh. iii. 13); the Gate of the Fountain (Neh. ii. 14); and on the east, the Water Gate, the Prison Gate, the Sheep Gate, and the Fish Gate. All these, and perhaps some others, are mentioned in Scripture, but most of them are involved in endless controversy; indeed, the difference of opinion that prevails on the subject of the walls of Jerusalem is so wide, and the feelings connected with it are so intense, that the haze of doubt produced by these disputes extends to many other subjects connected with the city. At all events, the visitor who wanders over the two miles and a half which form the circuit of modern Jerusalem, will not find the gates now mentioned. On the contrary, there exist at present only four open gates, or one on each side; though other four, walled up and never opened, are visible in the fortifications. On the west side is the Bab-el-Khulil, or the Hebron Gate, called also the Bethlehem, the Jaffa, and the Pilgrims.' On the north lies the Damascus Gate, by which travellers from that city, from Sychar, and other places in North Palestine, commonly enter Jerusalem. On the east we find what is now called St. Stephen's Gate by the Franks, while Mussulmans call it Bab-es-Subat, or Gate of the Tribes; and some Romanists, "The Gate of our Lady Mary." The road from it leads to Anata, or Anathoth, to Bethany and places adjacent. And the fourth gate is called Bab-en-Nebi Doud, the Gate of the Prophet David. From it several paths lead down to the valleys of Jehoshaphat and Hinnom.

The gates which are now walled up are—first, on the north side, Bab-es-Zahary, or "the flowery;" secondly,

the Dung Gate, on the south, or Bab-el-Mugharibeh ; thirdly, on the east, a gate called by the natives "The Eternal," but by others, "The Golden ;" and fourthly, a gate which is rarely mentioned, near the south wall of the Great Mosque. The Porta Aurea, or the Golden Gate, mentioned in this list, has been shut up for centuries. It is a somewhat massive structure of Roman workmanship ; and the interior recess, formed by the wall which blocks it up, is used by Mohammedans as a place for prayer connected with the Great Mosque. The traditions which are circulated regarding it are characteristic and numerous. It is walled up, according to some, because the adherents of Mohammed believe that a king is to enter by it who will take possession of the city, and become lord of the whole earth. The basis of that tradition can easily be divined. According to the Islamites, the Porta Aurea, which they call the Gate of Mercy, was walled up for security, because it fronts the desert, and was exposed to the sudden attacks of its roaming hordes. Still others add that it was built up by Omar himself, and will not be opened again till the coming of Christ. When the Crusaders had possession of Jerusalem, the Porta Aurea was opened once each year, to celebrate the Saviour's triumphal entrance into Jerusalem, when the people who were soon to cry "Crucify! Crucify!" were as vehement in shouting "Hósanna."

A passing reference has already been made to a causeway or bridge by which Solomon connected Mount Zion, where the palace of the kings of Israel stood, with the Temple, which crowned Moriah. There was a

deep valley between the two, which is now much filled up by ruins and rubbish, and the thousand changes which have swept over the ill-fated city; and across that valley a pathway was thrown for the convenience of royalty when it went to worship. Though historians had made distinct mention of that work, it was long forgotten, and no trace of it was known or noticed. In recent times, however, the scrutiny of modern travellers has discovered some of the substructions of that viaduct. The place of these remains is approached by a steep street, leading from the Latin Convent to near the corner of the Great Mosque; and no one should now visit Jerusalem without examining these stones, so vast and so hoary in their antiquity, connecting us, probably, with the days of Solomon and his successors. Three courses still remain, of which one is five feet four inches thick, and the others about as much; while one stone is twenty feet six inches long, and other two stones are not much less.

The men who laid such foundations, and reared such structures upon them, no doubt felt elated amid their colossal enterprise. Ba'albec, Palmyra, and the bridge on Mount Moriah — who would have dared to predict the desolation of these vast structures when they stood in their glory to add to the pride of man? And yet that desolation has come; so that not merely man, but his most majestic works are seen to be as grass. In the view of such things, are we not directly confronted with Him who is strong alike to smite or to save, and who can make the feeblest strong, or the strongest like flax before the flame? It is such

spectacles that sometimes render a sojourn in the Holy City painful. Were there waters and willows there as at Babylon, many a Christian pilgrim—we mean pilgrims of the scriptural type—would hang their harps upon them, and weep much for the hurt of the daughters of Jerusalem. It is believed that it was this viaduct—"the ascent by which the king went up to the house of the Lord"—that amazed the Queen of Sheba, "so that there was no more spirit in her." Whether that was actually the case or not, the work was stupendous. It forms another reason why we should pause before we assume a superiority over the ancients in regard to architecture. In mass, at least, they far surpassed the moderns.

In trying to form some idea of the ancient city, we should not pass by its towers without some attention. They are referred to in Scripture in various connections, but the chief of those that remain date from the days of Herod the Great. The Tower of Hippicus stood at the north-west corner of the city, and was named after a friend of Herod's who perished in battle. Other towers were those of Phasaelus and Mariamne,—the former named after the friend, and the latter after the wife of Herod, by whom both were built. These towers were of well-known importance during the siege of Jerusalem, and in their neighbourhood some of the most terrible scenes of that tragic chapter in man's history were enacted. At present, however, their site and all that relates to them form another arena for antiquarian debate. The pride of the tyrant who built them has long been laid in the dust. Magnificent as he was in his tastes, and

gifted above most of his contemporaries, Herod the Great was a monster of all conceivable iniquity,—a seven-fold murderer,—and he and his proudest monuments are equally fallen now. How different the lot of the lowliest believer in Jesus, in Herod's oppressed dominions !

One tower, however, may deserve a more special notice, namely, that of Antonia; so designated by Herod in honour of Mark Antony. It was deemed the Citadel of Jerusalem, and communicated with the cloisters of the Temple by secret passages, through which soldiers could hasten to quell the tumults which sometimes happened at the high festivals of Judaism. It was there that Pilate found a guard for the entombed body of Jesus; and along one of these passages Paul was conveyed when the Jews rose up against him, and would have put him to death (Acts xxi., xxii.) There he defended his conduct, and declared his conversion; there, in short, he did to a riotous mob what he subsequently repeated to King Agrippa, Bernice, and Festus. And thus in crypt, and under the canopy of heaven, by pool or mount, in garden or amid ruins, the events of redemption are pressed upon us here in aspects numberless, but all attractive. If the heart be still without God, it must needs be detected here; if He be its chosen portion, we may here rejoice more than ever in his exuberant favour.

We need not try to tell the bloody scenes which the Tower of Antonia witnessed during the siege of Jerusalem. The death-struggles of a proud, a corrupt, and doomed nation there took place; and there blood was

shed like water, while the dead were piled in heaps till walls might be scaled by climbing over the ghastly piles.

It will be noticed that no detailed reference has been made to the *walls* of Jerusalem. They have given rise to some of the most acrimonious of all the discussions raised regarding the city. On the side next the Mount of Olives, along the whole course of the brook Kidron, Upper and Lower, as well as on the side skirted by the Valleys of Hinnom and Gihon, there can be no dispute. The walls in these parts are to-day altogether where they must have been ever since Jerusalem was a fenced city; and some of the stones are at once so massive and so peculiar in their formation, that no doubt can for a moment be entertained regarding their antiquity. But the side on which the city opens up towards the country, that is, to the north or north-west, has become an arena for high debate, and a wordy warfare as to the walls of Jerusalem is waged there, as intense of its kind as the most bloody struggle that ever was maintained between Jew and Roman, or Persian, or Turk. The reason is not that there is really much difficulty in the question itself. It is confessed that at different periods there were three walls constructed there; the second nearer the open country than the first, and the third than the second, as the exigencies of defence, or the increase of the population required. But where were these walls placed in regard to the spot which at present is believed by many to mark the place of the Sepulchre? The crucifixion and all its accompaniments were outside the walls. Hence it is a life-and-death struggle for the devotees of tradition to maintain that the walls ran in

a certain direction, or included certain localities; while those who consider the question with no foregone conclusion to uphold, and with no guide but the New Testament to consult, are free and unembarrassed in their deductions. Into the controversy, however, we do not enter further than to say, that of all the hopeless efforts made by man, it seems one of the most hopeless, to attempt to prove that the present alleged site of the Holy Sepulchre was outside the walls. In that respect, as in many others, superstition has forged and rivetted its fetters upon man.

THE JAFFA GATE AND THE TOWER OF DAVID.

As we have already seen, this gate is also called the Gate of Bethlehem, the Pilgrims' Gate, and the Hebron Gate. It is commonly the first that is entered by visitors to Jerusalem from the west. Whether we come by the way of the Desert of Beersheba, Hebron, and other places in the south parts of Palestine, or from ancient Joppa on the west, this is the usual entrance into the sacred precincts. It is situated close beside the Citadel, which lies to the north-west of Mount Zion. Like the other gates, it is regularly closed and guarded at night; but all travellers tell that a golden or a silver key can secure admission at most hours. In the time of the Crusades, the adjoining Castle was called the Citadel of David. It consists of an irregular assemblage of square towers, surrounded on the side next the city by a low wall, and on the outer side by a deep trench. From the edge of that trench the towers spring

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Mount
Moriah

Garden of
Gethsemane

Tomb
of Absalom

Mount of
Olives



VALLEY OF JEHOSEPHAT.

up, and are there fortified by a solid sloping buttress. The north-eastern tower, called by pre-eminence the Tower of David, is manifestly ancient. The lower portion, to the height of about fifty feet, is built of large stones, bevelled in the peculiar manner which carries us back over eighteen centuries at least, and resembling some of the remaining portions of the ancient city wall, and other unquestionable ancient remains. The tower is quadrangular, but not square; but no entrance is found to the lower and more ancient portion, as it is buried, perhaps to the extent of ten feet or more, in the rubbish and debris accumulated on Mount Zion. But it should be observed, that though the popular voice and tradition have for centuries called this the Tower of David, some exact investigators of the antiquities of Jerusalem have now little doubt that it is part of the Tower of Hippicus, already named, built by Herod, and spared by Titus when he sacked the city—the most prominent remnant of antiquity now visible in Jerusalem. It is known to have been surmounted of old by a stately residence, the abode of royalty; but in the deep degradation of the place, this tower, like all the rest, has shared.

THE VALLEY OF JEHOSEPHAT.

To form a correct impression as to this valley, it may be well to take our place once more on the slope of Olivet looking toward the city. From that position the Valley of Jehosephat is seen commencing on the north side of Jerusalem. At first it is rather

a depression than an actual valley or glen ; but it deepens as we advance eastward, and when it reaches the southern root of the Mount of Olives, the valley suddenly bends to the south. In that part of its course it forms a defence for the city which rendered it impregnable in ancient warfare. The gulf is precipitous,—somewhat like the Castle Rock in Edinburgh. The valley is joined at the south-east corner of the city by another valley from the west, namely, the Valley of Hinnom ; and that screens the city on the south. The Valley of Hinnom becomes that of Gihon a little further up. And thus on three sides the city of the Great King has natural defences, not very important now, but once sufficient against any ordinary assailant. It was on the north, or north-west, therefore, that it could be effectually attacked ; and we know that there the deadly conflict between besieger and besieged has a hundred times been waged. On the east, the south, and south-west sides, the surrounding valleys formed the strength of Jerusalem ; elsewhere it was vulnerable, and there its heroes or its maddened fanatics fought and fell.

The Valley of Jehoshaphat* is the bed of the brook Kidron ; and when there is water in existence there, it is carried off through that channel to the gloomy gulf of the Dead Sea. It is somewhat difficult to say why so much consequence is now attached to this valley, as it was scarcely known in the Old Testament under

* The name Jehoshaphat means in Hebrew, "Jehovah judges;" and from some impression founded upon that, Romanists, Mussulmans, and Jews alike believe that the final judgment will take place in this valley.

its present name. But as Joel speaks of a Valley of Jehoshaphat where God will judge the heathen, that name has for the last fifteen or sixteen hundred years, without any other authority, been applied to this glen.

For part of its course the Kidron is fringed by excavated tombs. Advancing along the valley from north to south, the rocks on which the ramparts of the city rest, are about 100 feet high, and the glen about 145 feet wide. As we proceed southward, the banks become more precipitous, a bridge of one arch is thrown across the brook, and not far distant are found what have long been regarded as the Tombs of Jehoshaphat, of Absalom, and others. A little further on, the valley becomes a mere ravine, and the wall of the Temple area (of the Mosque now) here overhangs the place. The height of the rock there approaches 200 feet. Proceeding still further south, with Gethsemane on the east and the city on the west, we reach the village of Siloam and its pool, the entrance of the Valley of Hinnom, then the Well of Job or Nehemiah at En-Rogel; and soon after that the valley opens up into corn fields, as indeed there are patches under culture at different places along the margin. Olive and fig trees are planted there, and ere it reaches the Dead Sea, the Valley of Jehoshaphat has become at one place "Monk's Valley,"—at another, "the Valley of Fire." Numerous wadies open into this course, which run east from the water-shed at about the level of Jerusalem; but though small patches of cultivated land are found in some of them, yet, like the Kidron itself, they contain no perennial stream.

TOMBS IN THE VALLEY.

Reference has been made to the tombs which skirt the Kidron. Names are of course attached to them ; and the Tombs of Helena, of the Virgin Mary, of Jehoshaphat, of St. James, of Zacharias, of the prophets, and others, are mentioned. The ascription of one of these to Absalom rests on the authority of 2 Sam. xviii. 18, where we read that when Absalom had no children, he reared up a pillar to himself in the King's Dale. But though we retain the traditional name, it must be added that many circumstances combine to prove that this monument is of comparatively modern origin. It is chiefly hewn from the solid rock, and forms a conspicuous and pleasing, though dilapidated object in the valley. Neither Jew nor Moslem will pass without casting a stone, and spitting at the pile, on account of the character of him whose monument it is fabled to be. It is about 24 feet square, and is ornamented by pillars and pilasters of the Ionic order, though some Doric ornaments are also found there. Between the portion cut from the rock, which is about 20 feet high, and the mason-work a-top, which is about 20 more, the whole height rises to about 40 feet. The most intelligent travellers now agree that the style of this monument betokens a much more recent origin than tradition assigns to it. Moreover, it has changed names so often, that all is doubt regarding it. The Tomb of Jehoshaphat at one time, passes into the Tomb of Isaiah at another ; then some other worthy supplants both :

so that, like a thousand sights and scenes in this land of ruins and of figments, the chief certainty is that nothing is certainly known upon the subject.

Few things can strike the traveller more solemnly in this solemn land than the tombs excavated in the rocks in the vicinity of Jerusalem. Some of these have become the habitations of the living ; a few are filled with skulls and skeletons, but whether of Jews, Romans, Crusaders, more ancient or more modern occupants, who can tell? Most of them, however, are empty now, and the bodies once deposited there have literally become dust, impalpable, invisible. Not one solitary instance can be mentioned in which we assuredly know who were the first occupants of these abodes, excavated as they were with great labour, and sometimes with great taste. This Tomb of Absalom, in particular, belongs to that class. No intelligent visitor believes that it had any real connection with the unprincipled son of David. Though it had, his name is at once reprobated and condemned—and thus in one case more we read the vanity of mortal man. He who had this mausoleum constructed here, no doubt, anticipated immortality for his name ; but instead of that, his monument, battered and rifled as it is, tells no more about him than we can tell of what is still a thousand years away in the distant future.

The Tomb of Zechariah, not far from that of Absalom, is not less apocryphal. It was at one time assigned to King Hezekiah, but now by mere force of traditional repetition, without any historical authority, the name of Zechariah is attached to it. But what Zechariah? the

prophet, or who else? That also is unknown, and a blind guide, tradition, is all we have to follow in the case. The structure is a square pile, about 20 feet high, adorned with Ionic pilasters, and having a pyramidal top—all cut from the solid rock. This monolith is described as containing a certain mixture of the Greek and the Egyptian styles,—“a link between the Pyramids and the Parthenon;” but more severe judges deem such criticism too encomiastic. It is not to be denied, however, that though the names of these tombs be utterly mythical, their presence adds beauty to the ravine, and imparts a shade of grandeur, gloomy, but not therefore inappropriate to the scene.

At no great distance from the tombs now described there is another, near the village of Silwān (Siloam), which is also hewn from the solid rock. It is said to be the Tomb of Pharaoh's daughter, whom Solomon married, and who caused that wise king to cease from his wisdom. But as that also is utterly mythical, we may leave it in the obscurity in which it has been for ages. Nor can we speak more positively regarding what is called the Tomb of Jehoshaphat. It is situated behind that of Absalom, and is subterranean. The Jews are allowed to exercise entire control regarding it, and keep it always closed. The floating legends of the vicinity say that the Hebrews there preserve a copy of their law, with other relics of former days and former glory; but nothing definite is known, and, perhaps, were excavations made, the spot would be discharmed; it would just be one tomb more added to the others around it whose original occupants have faded away

from the memories of men, without an echo or a vestige to tell who they were. Each one, however, will answer to his name when the great muster is made for the last assize. How fleeting the things of earth ! How stable the word of God !

The Tombs of the Prophets have also been mentioned as existing in this vicinity, at least according to tradition. They are called also the Catacombs of the Mount of Olives, and lie somewhat to the south-west of the minaret which crowns that Mount. The entrance to these subterranean abodes is found in an olive garden, and the descent is by an aperture in the rock, which admits to a semicircular chamber, as that conducts the visitor towards the interior of the excavation in the hill side. The passage ends in a gallery connected with the first chamber, and various other compartments, galleries, or chambers, are mentioned as forming these crypts. They are described, however, by different travellers in very different ways. Some speak of them as splendid remains of antiquity ; and one of the catacombs, called that of Helena, is spoken of as a monument of royal magnificence, while others describe them as being one and all very rude excavations,—formed, some conjecture, “for speculation purposes.” The ornamental carvings are not allowed to possess much beauty. But after all the needed deductions have been made, our interest is scarcely lessened in that strange under-ground world and under-ground existence, where generation after generation must have slept, till some ruthless hand scattered their remains to the wind. There can be no doubt that much of the ground near Jerusalem is hollow, or at least

honey-combed; and if subterranean Rome was reputed a rival for Rome in open day, the same may perhaps be said of some parts of the neighbourhood of the Jewish metropolis, now the metropolis alike of Romanist and Greek, of Frank and Oriental.

THE TOMBS OF THE KINGS.

The ruins or excavations known under this name deserve a more particular notice. They stand upon a different side of the city from those which have now been referred to, namely, on the road to Sychar, and at a short distance from the Damascus Gate. Though it is difficult to convey an exact idea of the place without a series of engravings, they should not be passed over, even in a brief account of Jerusalem. Whatever the antiquaries may eventually decide regarding them, these crypts are worthy of being the last resting-place of royalty. A pathway, cut in the solid rock, leads down from the level of the ground, to a large, open court, above one hundred feet square, also excavated from the rock. One end of that court is decorated with a portico, on which flowers and fruits are exquisitely chiselled; and to the left of that portico an entrance leads into an ante-room, twelve feet square, still cut exclusively from the solid limestone rock. Passing through that room, the visitor enters another which is much larger—and still all solid, though seven or eight yards square. Through this stately chamber he passes on to five or six others, all formed by the same process of excavation; and round all these apartments, except

the first, niches are cut in the live rock, as receptacles for the dead. The coverings of these had been richly carved, but they are now for the most part demolished. The doors of the chambers, of which none are now entire, had been made of stone panels, swung upon stone hinges, moving in stone sockets; everything here, in short, as well as the dwellings of the dead, has been fashioned from the rock, and this palace of departed royalty seemed destined to endure, if aught earthly could do so. It may be noticed, moreover, that the decorations here are all joyous, rather than grave or melancholy; as if the associations of those dead with death were better represented by flowers and festoons than by the cypress and the skeleton. In a word, so exquisite were these tombs, that some regard them as those referred to by Pausanias, who names them along with the tomb of King Mausolus, which has become a very proverb for its grandeur.

But whose tombs are these? Are they really the last resting-place of the kings of Judah, as tradition would teach? On the contrary, their name is a deception, like much more in this land of superstitious falsehoods. Dr. Clarke, and after him Dr. Robinson, reckon them the tomb of Helena, widow of Monobazus, king of Adiabene, who became a Jewess, and died at Jerusalem, in the reign of Claudius Cæsar. Chateaubriand, and after him Dr. Wilson, assign them to the line of Herod; but the question is too intricate to be considered here. Enough to say that they are not the tombs of the kings of Judah—enough to have pointed out the structure and the beauty of these spacious dwellings of the dead

—a scene full at once of interest and of saddening amazement to the mind that thinks as it gazes.

For one should not leave a spot so peculiar without glancing, at least, at the lessons which may there be impressed. In all the pomp and circumstance, most probably of royalty, these tombs have been constructed. Many years, much treasure, and perhaps some lives were lavished on excavations at once so elaborate and so tasteful. As chamber after chamber was hewed out, and as niche after niche was formed, no doubt *some one* felt elated by the permanence thus given to his memory and his name. But alas for mortal man! Who did all this? is a question now agitated, and not likely to be soon settled. Who planned a work in many respects so exquisite? Who constructed monuments so costly? Was it a Jewish proselyte? Was it the line of the Herods? Was it some section of royalty just known as “the kings?” All is uncertain now; and thus the great swelling hopes of men perish like a lie. No doubt when the Egyptian king had built the Great Pyramid, he deemed himself immortal—*his* name would never rot. And yet for many generations he was utterly unknown; and even after long excavations and much deciphering, we have arrived only at a good guess as to who the builder was. Were it not wise, then, for men to busy themselves somewhat more about the “honour which cometh from God only?”

Amid the relics of former times observed in these tombs, is a stone formed so as to shut up one of the doors into the crypts. It is not easy to make its formation plain without an engraving; but those who have

examined it with care, have told us that it very aptly illustrates the mode employed for shutting the tomb where Jesus lay. The great stone that was rolled to the door, the difficulty of removing it, the need of stooping down before an entrance could be effected, and other things, are all made plain by a glance at this aperture. It is, in truth, another point of contact between eighteen centuries ago and this hour—another illustration of the Bible from this wonder-land.

But other thoughts press upon the mind amid such sepulchral depths. The niches are empty now, and not a bone remains to indicate their occupants, though fancy can well re-people them again. Men who had followed the fortunes of David, or admired the gorgeousness of his son, might occupy some of these tombs around Jerusalem. In later times, some of those whom the Saviour healed—the man of Bethesda, or Bartimeus, or Lazarus himself, might be laid at last in some of these dark recesses. He who once lay *there* saw the crucifixion; and he that slept his last, long sleep *yonder*, saw the Saviour work his miracles;—but conjecture is endless amid such scenes. Lone Judah here, too, surely weeps beneath her palm, and we of the west may deepen her dirge by adding ours:—

“ Oh ! weep for those who wept by Babel's stream,
Whose shrines are desolate, whose land a dream;
Weep for the harp,—lone Judah's broken shell;
Mourn,—where their God hath dwelt, the godless dwell.”

One regrets to disenchant any of the spots which have long stood prominent before the minds of men, yet we fear that that must be done in regard to—

THE POOL OF SILOAM.

Returning to the east side of the city, we find the intermittent pool and stream of Siloam, or Siloah, which is mentioned in Neh. iii. 15, in Isa. viii. 6, and John ix. 7, 11. It is situated in the immediate proximity of the Valley of Jehoshaphat, or rather in it, at the mouth of the Tyropœon, the valley which divided the city into two, but which is now so much filled up with ruins and debris as largely to alter the contour of the space enclosed by the walls. The Pool is one of the most attractive spots near Jerusalem, though less so, perhaps, than poetry would persuade us. Its waters are described by some as sweet and copious; by others as slightly brackish, though more at some seasons than at others. They flow from an artificial basin formed under a cliff, and immediately enter a larger reservoir, 53 feet long, by 18 feet wide, and 19 deep. Steps lead down to the water. The structure is decorated with pillars, supposed to be the remains of a former chapel, and the place is altogether such as indicates the importance of the pool and stream which—

“Flowed

“Fast by the oracle of God.”

The water escapes by a channel cut in the rock. Where it is laid bare, the stream is abundant, and is drawn off to irrigate some gardens containing fruit-trees of various kinds, which in their turn add to the beauty of the place. Around the fountain many plants, nourished by the

rare moisture, still further augment that beauty; and the tinkling of the waters as they "go softly," is a sound rarely heard in the vicinity of Jerusalem. Indeed the fertility of this spot, its gardens and vegetable productions, and the precipitous crags overhanging the whole, together with the sacred associations of the place, render it altogether a scene of grandeur. Some have even thought that the blended richness and sacredness of this scene, when seen in the light of the Bible, would repay the toil and trouble of a visit to the Holy Land. Add to these its intimate connection with the Redeemer, and Siloam becomes a shrine, where the reverent mind may happily find itself in close proximity with the Unseen and the Eternal.

But it now appears that the first basin in which the waters are received is not the actual fountain-head. It is rather the outlet or terminus of a sinuous, subterranean passage, ascertained to be about 1750 feet in length, and which conveys the water from what is called the "Fountain of the Virgin," in the Valley of Jehoshaphat. Dr. Robinson and a fellow-traveller crept through that passage, at some personal risk, and thus demonstrated the connection between the two fountains. The opinion may safely be hazarded, that that discovery will be the precursor of many more of a similar kind, regarding the water-supply for the Temple service, and other things in regard to the Jerusalem of the Bible.

We have called Siloam an intermittent fountain, but the term needs explanation. Dr. Robinson records that he saw the water rise a foot in five minutes, at

the Fountain of the Virgin, the feeder of Siloam, and fall again in about the same space of time. An account, which is at least 1400 years old, runs thus: "Siloam is a fountain at the foot of Mount Zion, whose waters do not flow regularly, but on certain days and hours, and issue with a great noise from hollows and caverns in the hardest rock." After a thorough examination of Siloam, Dr. Robinson suggests that the fountain now called the Virgin's may be the King's Pool of Nehemiah (ii. 14.); or Solomon's Pool, mentioned by Josephus; or even Bethesda, mentioned by John. What a storehouse of conjectures has this most historical of all cities become! And how satisfied is the soul when it can fall back on the immutable verities connected with the Son—the Sent of God.

At a short distance from the pool stands a sycamore-tree, which is said to mark the spot where Isaiah was martyred; for it is believed that he was sawn asunder there, according to a common interpretation of Paul's allusion in his martyrology, near the end of the Epistle to the Hebrews. Still further along the valley is En-Rogel,—at least what is believed to be its modern representative,—“the Well of the Spies” (2 Sam xvii. 17), and now the Well of Job, or Joab. But here also conflicting theories are held, and one cannot wander long, or linger much among the marvels of Jerusalem, without feeling that, however needful for the elucidation of truth, these antiquarian contests are only by a few shades less vexatious than the myths of superstition, or the inventions of a gross and stolid ignorance.

In this neighbourhood, also, upon the portion of Mount Zion which is outside the walls of the city, the burial-place for Christians is now found. But neither traditional nor modern associations need be added to those which already cluster round Siloam, to render it a favourite haunt of the Christian traveller. Thither the Saviour sent the blind man to bathe his eyes, and thence he returned seeing, though no light had ever shone before for him—an emblem this of the better light which is shed upon the soul. Many a traveller since then has bathed his eyes at that pool, not for miraculous healing, but for a kind of materialized communion with Him who wrought such deeds of mercy there. At that refreshing spot, moreover, we may picture the Saviour himself not seldom lingering, for it was not far from the pathway which led to his favourite home—if he had a home at all,—the abode of Lazarus, and Martha, and Mary; and no one can frequent that neighbourhood without feeling that the tie between things earthly and things heavenly becomes closer there, through Him who bridged the gulf which separates man from his God.

MOUNT ZION.

Few names ever pronounced by the lips of man have given rise to more solemn associations than this. It would be long to tell how David first took this hill from the Jebusites, who had a fortress there, occupied the castle which he had stormed, erected fresh structures, and made it at last the citadel of his capital. It

was in some sort the cradle of his empire, as it became the home of its kings.

Mount Zion occupies the south-west corner of the city of Jerusalem. Descending the Valley of Gihon from the north-west, and through the Valley of the son of Hinnom till it opens into that of Jehoshaphat, we have the Mount upon our left, with its pendant, the Hill of Ophel, called by Josephus Ophla. Near the corner, at the junction of the two valleys, the sides of the rocks are cut perpendicularly, as if they had once served for colossal quarries; and Mount Zion is there about 154 feet high above the Valley of Hinnom, where Ahaz and Manasseh caused their children to pass through the fire; so that atrocities the most revolting that earth ever saw, and which seem to rival the fiendishness of hell, were perpetrated under the very shadow of that Mount, concerning which we read, "I have set my King upon my holy hill of Zion." At the junction of the two defiles, the height of the precipice, according to Dr. Robinson, is not less than 300 feet.

But the hill itself is the chief object of interest. So prominent is its place in Scripture, so largely has it been used in revelation, so much of our religion hovers round that elevation, that if we could blot from the Bible the passages which relate to Zion, the truth would be shorn of many attractions. Upon it the ark of the covenant once found a resting-place. The kings of Judah had their palaces there, when it was adorned in a style which we can now scarcely appreciate. Thence went forth the law which was to guide all lands, and the gospel which was to gladden them.

David the king made Zion the burden of many a hymn, Prophet after prophet told of its coming glory. That King who was set upon the hill of Zion, and who was to dash in pieces all who resisted his power, derived some portion of his glory from the spot. Nowhere, in short, even in the land called the Holy, do we find more crowding memories, more gladdening lessons than on and around that little hill.

Part of it is now occupied by a mosque; other portions form a ploughed field, according to Micah's prediction (iii. 12); and many a traveller has thence brought away some ears of grain to vegetate and hallow some garden in the West. Within the mosque which crowns the summit, the tomb of David is said to be found, carefully sequestered from eyes not Moslem, yet penetrated by Western curiosity, and described as tawdry and mean to a degree that is offensive. Suspicion may attach to the tradition in regard to the very spot, but we certainly know that "David slept with his fathers," and "was buried in the city of David," or on Mount Zion. Moreover, Peter said in one of his first addresses that "the sepulchre of David was among them to that day." It was thus known for 700 or 800 years after the great monarch's death, and it seems possible that on this Mount, perhaps in this very mosque, the tomb of David *may* yet be found. When Moslem bigotry shall have relaxed a little, and allowed competent judges to explore the place, questions which are at present insoluble may be solved. Meanwhile, we may be satisfied that on this Mount the remains of David found a resting-place; here his body

found a home, when his soul, according to his own matchless hymn, went up to dwell "in the house of the Lord for ever." The graves of foreigners, missionaries, and others, with at least one Christian church, are now found upon Mount Zion. A Protestant cemetery has at length been secured there; that is, men have taken possession of it for Him who is judge alike of the quick and the dead,—and He will at last assert and establish his claim to all his own.

But besides the tomb of David, Mount Zion is the site of the house said to contain the room in which Christ instituted the sacrament of the supper. It is reputed one of the oldest houses in Jerusalem, and some of those who listen to sentiment rather than to proof, or even probabilities, favour the supposition that this may be the very place where the Saviour said, "Do this in remembrance of me." "The building said to contain the tomb of David," writes a recent traveller, "and also the room in which Christ instituted the last supper, is one of the oldest in Jerusalem, and deserving of much more regard than it has yet received." But when we learn that at first the building was supposed to be that in which the disciples were alleged to be present on the day of Pentecost; that it afterwards began to be called the Coenaculum, or Last Supper room; and that, moreover, it was said to contain a pillar to which the Saviour was bound when he was scourged, as well as other relics, we pass into the region of pure inventions, and gladly fall back on the infallible Informant, illustrated by the general aspect of the spot, and the scenes around, which are unques-

tionably genuine and scriptural. "The story of the Tomb of David is probably of Mohammedan origin," writes one;—a thousand things in Jerusalem, one may safely say, are of monkish origin, and as mendacious as they are monkish.

On its south-eastern slope, Mount Zion has been extended, and its appearance altered, by stones and rubbish. At some places in the vicinity, remains of the ancient walls are still visible in bevelled stones of prodigious size, pointing, as many think, back to the times of the Herods, or even further still. Some of these, amid the numerous overthrows, have been precipitated in fragments into the valley below,—at once fulfilling the Saviour's threat as to the razing of Jerusalem, in spite of the hugeness of its stone defences, and changing the aspect of the valley. Near what is deemed the Tomb of David, an Armenian convent raises its shapeless mass. It is a large, isolated building, and contains the tombs and monuments of the Armenian bishops of Jerusalem. But the stone which closed the sepulchre of the Saviour, when Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus, once the timid, but at last the bold, entombed him, is also pointed out here; and at every step along these hills or lanes one is reminded of the treatment which the word of God has received at the hands of many commentators, critics, and men of every class. Places not a few appear here as sacred as aught that is material can ever be; and that represents the inspired text. But interspersed with these are endless human additions, by which the native attractions of the place are marred; and these represent the vain glosses of

many a darkling critic and gloomy chronicler. The written word stands calm, majestic, and unique, embodying the mind of God: it is what Adolphe Monod on his death-bed called it,—“heaven in words.” But man lays his hand upon that word. To one page he adds; from another he subtracts. Now, he mingles some of his own inventions; anon, he insinuates some deleterious ingredient, and thus too often succeeds in converting the food of the soul into poison. One of the advantages of a visit to Jerusalem is, a deeper conviction than ever of the need of clinging closer and closer to the inspired word, and confiding in it alone as our guide and our light on the way to eternity. All besides is a lie, or tends to lies.

But something more than even monkish legends may be met with on these mounts. Oriental fancy, wild as that of the “Arabian Nights,” still luxuriates here. Jewish workmen, for example, according to an ancient tale, were once digging on Mount Zion. They suddenly opened a vast hall, of magnificent proportions and gorgeous decorations, in which were found the tombs of David, and Solomon his son. The enormous riches of these two kings were also found stored up there. But a voice of thunder instantly warned the intruders to retire; a storm of wind drove them from the place; and the hall was closed, never more to be opened. According to another phase of the legend, the coffin of David, unapproachable on account of the glory which encircles it, is hovering somewhere about Mount Zion. Nay, more, some Jews are said to hold that David is himself the Messiah, who is yet to come and reign in

a glory of which his first empire was but a type. As all this is gratifying to their wounded spirits, so long chafed and fretted by the lies which they prefer to the truth of God, such legends are greedily believed, and perhaps the brilliance of such baseless hopes appears the brighter when it is contrasted with the cold and melancholy apartment which is shown as the Coenaculum of the Christian's Messiah.

But though these things only help to obscure the truth a little more, and though God in his holy providence, working through many generations, has thrown down and remodelled not a little, in strict fulfilment of prophecy, Zion still rises as of old, sheer and steep over the neighbouring valleys. Though a considerable part of it is outside the city walls, it may now, as of old, fulfil the requirements of the assurance—"They that trust in the Lord shall be as Mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abideth for ever." On the summit and the slopes of this ridge, superstition, as we have just seen, has amassed many of its poor legends, and if anything could burlesque a scene so solemn, it would be the allegation that the column on which the cock stood which crowed to awaken the dormant conscience of Peter, is still found there.

But in spite of such pretences, less equivocal sights greet us here. Olivet, and all its sacred associations are at hand. The brook Kidron is just below. The neighbourhood of Siloam, of the Field of Blood, and a hundred spots far more than classical, are near; while the Holy Hill of Zion, where God set up the Priest upon his throne (Psalm ii.), rivets our regards, till one longs

for the day when its encumbering rubbish, material and moral, shall all be swept away. The promised time *will* come when the Deliverer who came out of Zion shall be honoured there as well as all round the world.

To acquire a correct idea of this Mount, description is not the best method: the ancient advice should be followed—"Walk about Zion, tell the high towers thereof," and then comprehend both its commanding position and its infinitely sacred associations. We are to remember that its summit is nearly as high as the highest point of land in England, being about 2200 feet above the level of the sea. We are not to forget what has recently been said,—that to a traveller approaching Jerusalem from the west or the east, it must always have presented the appearance of a mountain city, beyond any capital of the known world. "The mountain throne"—"the mountain sanctuary"—"the mount of God"—"the mountain which God desires to dwell in"—"in Salem is his tabernacle, and his dwelling-place in Zion,"—these, and countless other phrases, all tell of the glory of Zion, the "stronghold"—"the hill fort"—"the rocky hold of Jerusalem"—the refuge where first the Jebusite, and then the lion of the tribe of Judah stood at bay.

And it is not easy to break away from such a scene. Looking once more over this Mount and the natural defences of Jerusalem, one is more and more struck with its proud position as a capital. "The dark vale"—for that is the meaning of the name "Kedron"—"the ravine," as the first syllable in Gehinnom or Gehenna.

implies,—and the other natural munitions, give full force to the taunts of the old inhabitants of the place, when David appeared before the walls of Jebus. “Except thou take away the blind and the lame, thou shalt not come up hither,” was the defiance; meaning, perhaps, that the blind and the lame were sufficient for the defence of a place so strong. But proceeding far further back in history, through that region and near that town Abraham must have wandered. Jacob in some of his movements must have done the same. Joshua when combating for the actual possession of the promised land; the Philistines, the Romans, the Persians, the Saracens, Turks, and Crusaders, have all made Jerusalem the centre of mighty operations. Its name means “vision of peace,” and yet rarely has peace long prevailed within its walls, or in its neighbourhood. It may point, but it is by contrast, to that other Jerusalem, of which we know that salvation is its bulwark, and its gates praise.

No doubt, it is a sad pleasure to walk about Zion and gaze on her decay. What has she been? What is she now? Exalted near to heaven once, but now brought down to the edge of the pit. Yet the associations connected with her history and her name are perennial still. From day to day for ever, she must suggest some of the most gladdening thoughts that can animate the hearts of men. And more remains to be discovered. In the minds of those who have explored her ruins most carefully, the conviction is firm, that under the Temple there exists a fountain of water, and a vast apparatus of galleries, conduits, and channels for diffusing it.

The Pool of Siloam and other pools, it is believed, are fed from that central store of water, whether springing up on the spot, or conveyed thither in subterranean aqueducts; and from this fact there arose in the old Hebrew mind some of the finest associations of their faith. "There is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God, the holy place of the tabernacle of the most High"—"All my fresh springs are in thee"—"Draw water from the wells of salvation,"—these, and similar expressions, it is believed, refer to a great central supply for Temple purgations, and Temple purposes altogether. The city of Zion thus becomes inwoven with the thoughts which are recorded to gladden all earnest souls. While we sing her songs, and make the sentiments of David our own, we are helped by figures fetched from the earthly Jerusalem to prepare for that which is heavenly. The fountains of the one become the "river proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb" of the other—so that the more we catch the spirit that reigned in some souls in Jerusalem of old, the better are we prepared for the beatitudes of that which is "the mother of us all." But alas! Palestine is a land of ruins, and its ancient capital a city of death. The hands of ruthless men have spread desolation over all, and, like Jesus of old, we cannot but weep over her prostrate glories.

THE VALLEY OF GIHON

Stretches north-west and south from the Jaffa Gate. In the former direction it gradually opens up into the adjacent country, and in the latter it passes

into the Valley of Hinnom, and so debouches into that of Jehoshaphat. It forms a natural channel for the water that falls or gathers on a portion of the country north and north-west from Jerusalem ; and, accordingly, we find in the valley the Upper Pool of Gihon. Its local name is Birket-el-Mammilla, and there is an unwonted concord in regarding this as the reservoir concerning which we read that Hezekiah "stopped the upper water-course of Gihon, and brought it straight down to the west side of the city of David" (2 Chron. xxxii. 30). An aqueduct leading from the pool into the city can still be traced at some points, and that is believed to shed light upon the passage just quoted : the king had the water conveyed into the city, instead of allowing it to flow down in its natural channel to the Valley of Hinnom below. It is supposed by others that the water was conveyed into the city, from springs now unknown, by a secret and subterranean passage, that a besieging army might be ignorant of it. But however these things may be explained by future researches, the reservoir within the city called the Pool of Hezekiah, near the Tower of Hippicus, attests the opinion of former times upon the subject. The concealed spring just referred to, if such there be, is not to be confounded with the Upper Pool, which is dry in summer, and filled only by the rain.

Passing the Jaffa Gate on the left, we enter the lower segment of the valley, which skirts Mount Zion, and contains the Lower and larger Pool, or Birket-es-Sultan. Like the upper, it is supplied only by the rain, and most visitors agree to regard it as that to which

Isaiah refers (xxii. 9). It occupies the entire breadth of the valley, and is substantially constructed. Dr. Robinson mentions that the Upper Pool of Gihon is 316 feet long from east to west, 200 feet wide at one end, and 218 at the other, the depth being 18 feet. The Lower Pool is 592 feet in length; its width at the north end is 245 feet, and at the south extremity 275. Though the bottom is encumbered with rubbish, the depth at the north end is ascertained to be 35 feet, and at the opposite end 42. References to these pools are found in 2 Kings xviii. 17, 2 Chron. xxii. 30, Isa. vii. 3, xxxvi. 2, and elsewhere.

It is below the Lower Pool that the valley contracts into a mere ravine or dell. The steep rocks on the west side are honey-combed by caves excavated as sepulchres. These dwellings of the dead, so peculiarly Eastern, and so abundant in Palestine, are continued down the Valley of Hinnom; and as it opens into that of Jehoshaphat, which is crowded with the graves of many generations of Jews, this whole region appears to be an appropriate cincture for a city so decayed and so melancholy as that which was, and will yet be, a praise in all the earth. Death and its gloom, indeed, at present appear to be the chief characteristics of the place; and were not the Lord of Life revealed to faith, a walk in Gihon, in Hinnom, or on Mount Zion, would often be a source of sadness inexpressible.

The scenes or spots which have hitherto been described are chiefly such as the nature of the place or the contour of the ground indicates with tolerable precision. The Mount of Olives, the valleys, and other

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HOLY SEPULCHRE.

things, no one can ever mistake, whatever scepticism may be evoked by superstition as to the genuineness of certain alleged relics. But some of the places now to be glanced at belong to a different class. They are in part, at least—some would say wholly—apocryphal. Only the fact that they are connected with Jerusalem can save them from merited neglect.

THE CHURCH OF THE HOLY SEPULCHRE.

This is to many one of the most attractive scenes in Jerusalem. Here superstition runs riot; here the impulses of emotion are substituted for the power of truth; and here Satan has his seat,—all amid hideous caricatures of the heavenly plan by which the lost are saved. Regarding such spectacles, we cannot but re-echo the sentiments of one who said,—“The first tendency of every generous mind, on visiting Jerusalem, is rather to acquiesce, if possible, in the truth of the traditions which fix the site of the sepulchre, than to cavil at a belief so dear to the Christian heart.” But we must add,—“A revulsion takes place, on beholding the vile indecencies practised by superstitious votaries on the very threshold of the grave which they suppose to have been hallowed by the remains of their Redeemer.” The impudent deceptions, the falsehoods which a little child may unmask, the utter antagonism to the records of the Gospel, and the outrages without number offered to common-sense, all call upon us to reject, and that without one moment’s hesitation, the aggregate of incoherencies and manifest inventions

with which credulity is duped. Amid such a labyrinth, it would not be easy to give even a meagre outline of the marvels which are alleged to exist in the Church of the Sepulchre. Its twin domes, its pillars, and its massive but tasteless bulk, all render it prominent among the structures of Jerusalem. Dating from the days of Helena and Constantine, or about the year 325, the church is alleged to contain or to cover all the scenes made memorable by the crucifixion, the entombment, and the resurrection of the Redeemer, as well as much more that is purely fabulous. In spite of common-sense and the inspired narrative, all these are compressed into the space of a few square yards, and then superstition runs riot to dupe by its lying wonders.*

The church consists properly of three divisions, of which the first and the largest is that of the Holy Sepulchre proper. The stone on which the crucified body was anointed and prepared for burial is there shown. The rock in which the tomb

* We enumerate only a few of the marvels crowded under this church roof. The catalogue, without one word of argument, convicts the whole mass of imposture:—

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| 1. Stone of Unction. | 10. Place where she stood. |
| 2. Tomb of Melchizedek. | 11. Part of the Pillar of Flagellation. |
| 3. Tomb of Adam, and chapel. | 12. Where Christ appeared to his Mother after Resurrection. |
| 4. Place where Mary stood when Christ's body was anointed on No. 1. | 13. Where the Cross was recognised. |
| 5. Chapel of the Angel who announced the Resurrection. | 14. Place of Christ's bonds. |
| 6. The Holy Sepulchre. | 15. Chapel of the Centurion. |
| 7. Tombs of Joseph and Nicodemus. | 16. — Parting the Garments. |
| 8. The "Centre of the World." | 17. — Mocking. |
| 9. Place where Christ appeared to Mary Magdalene. | 18. — Penitent Thief. |
| | 19. — Finding the Cross. |
| | 20. Calvary and its details. |

is alleged to have been excavated has been cut away to a large extent ; but the place where the sepulchre was is still to be seen (men say), covered with *verde antique* marble and otherwise adorned, as Superstition well knows to do when commending her inventions for truth. Near the entrance to the place called the Tomb, a block of white marble is shown as the stone on which the angel sat to announce the resurrection ; and a crowd of supposed relics are paraded, all, we fear, more veritably worshipped than He to whom they are alleged to refer. Lamps to the number of about two hundred are perpetually burning, and ornaments of the richest kind are heaped upon the structure, forming what even Stanley calls a tattered and incongruous mass.

Adjoining to this store of traditionary imposture is the Church of the Holy Cross—that is, the cross which is alleged to have been miraculously discovered by the Empress Helena, though the legend should be blotted from the records of the past as one of the most unmitigated fictions ever palmed upon man for truth, while, at the same time, it is a mockery to be asked to believe it. Among other things, a rent is here shown in the rock, the reputed effect of the earthquake which accompanied the crucifixion.

The third church or chapel is that of Mount Calvary ; and there the rent appears again, with the addition of three holes, which are said to mark the spots where the three crosses were erected. This church contains the monuments of some of the Crusaders,—and *these* are realities. But amid the legends of the place, the

crowding decorations, and frequently the outrageous scenes which are witnessed among the rival worshippers, with rival legends and rival nationalities to goad them, one is rarely disposed to exercise any faith at all. On the contrary, the effect is often a sudden revulsion of feeling ; and alas for man, if this were religion ! Monks of all nations, Eastern and Western Latins, Greeks, Abyssinians, Nestorians, Copts, Armenians, Georgians, Maronites, and others, cluster in and around these fabrics ; and one has said, " Their songs are heard at all hours, both of the day and the night. The organ of the Latin monks, the cymbals of the Abyssinian, the voice of the Greek caloyer, the prayer of the solitary Armenian, the plaintive accents of the Coptic friar, alternately, or at once assail our ears." The result is not worship, but a confusion like that of Babel ; not reverence, or awe, or sacredness, but the burlesque of all that is commonly held to be religion.

And do these brethren all dwell together in unity ? Ah, no ! for around the supposed centre where the love of Heaven concentrated all its force, these worshippers have not seldom contended unto blood. Claims put forth by one sect and resisted by another, have led to fierce vituperation. Vituperation has led to blows and wounds, so that the floor which is held sacred has not unfrequently been stained by bloodshed.

Though we do not enter upon the disputed points regarding the sepulchre and its church, every presumption and probability is against its genuineness. If the visitor is pleased to persuade himself that this is the place where the Lord lay and where his feet first pressed

our earth after he returned to life, we may not challenge the right to indulge such self-persuasion. But it is utterly impossible to render it probable, nay possible, that all that is said to be contained under that one roof could be compressed into that space, as it is by the superstitions of the place. So wild are these, that they have actually brought under that church roof the spot where Mary stood afar off and witnessed the crucifixion of her son. We pass from the spot, however, satisfied with the fact that within the precincts of the city somewhere, nay, somewhere *near* this, Jesus died, and rose, and revived, the first-fruits of them that sleep. *That* is certain; but the precise places are at the best matters of doubtful disputation, and, as light dawns upon dark Jerusalem, these legends will gradually die out.

Yet, while shunning the keen controversy, the following very brief outline of the history of this alleged sepulchre and its pendants is submitted, that all may judge for themselves as to the probabilities or presumptions of the case.

The site of the sepulchre, it is assumed, was well known to believers in the first centuries of the faith. According to Jerome, who wrote in the fifth century, a temple was erected upon it by Adrian, the Roman emperor. Helena, already mentioned, visited the Holy City about the year 325, and was led to the spot where the Lord had lain, by the Christians of Jerusalem. Her son was willing to displace a temple built to Venus by one of his predecessors, by a Christian church; and he and his mother completed that undertaking. When the Pagan shrine was removed, a cavern was found

answering in all respects to the description of the tomb of the Redeemer given by the Evangelists; and many persuade themselves that that cave is his true and very sepulchre. True, an ecclesiastical historian of Constantine's time, namely, Eusebius, ascribes the discovery to the emperor, and not to Helena. True, also, some legends connected with other discoveries of the empress, are so manifestly got up for a purpose, that credulity itself must have some compunction in giving them credit. Not merely the tomb, but the cross of Jesus was found, along with two other crosses,—those of the two malefactors; but the Saviour's soon vindicated its supremacy by the miracles which it wrought. The inscription of Pilate, others allege, was the means of detecting the real cross; but miracle or inscription, it is much the same—an impudent fabrication, which has, nevertheless, been credited by willing myriads for fourteen or fifteen hundred years.

But to render the discovery complete, nails were found in the same pit with the cross; and these were of course believed to be the nails which had pierced the victim. Two were lost, but the other two were wrought, by order of the empress, into a crown for her son; and hence the famous "iron crown" of Italy is believed to trace its origin up to the crucifixion of the Son of God. The wood of the true cross, again, was scattered in bits far and wide over the world. Enough of it is supposed to exist to build a war-frigate; and the churches which have been founded in its honour, or for its veneration, are made holy by possessing a fragment of the tree. The miracles wrought by its virtue, the

charm-like power of every kind which it possessed, it were long indeed to catalogue.

But Chosroes, king of Persia, carried away the relic when he took Jerusalem. Heraclius recovered and restored it with abject superstitions, but with imperial pomp. When the Crusades began, the true cross became the prize and the glory of the zealots, till it was finally lost at the battle of Hattin, and remained, as the banner of the Christians, in the possession of the victorious Saladin. In spite, however, of all traditions regarding either the sepulchre or the wood of the true cross, we feel somewhat ashamed of dwelling so long upon such baseless fables; for, amid quotations from Cyril, from the Bordeaux Pilgrim, from St. Willibald, and others, we still regard the whole as an utter fabrication. Let the traveller visit the Holy City with the word of God for his guide, and then all that is needed to draw forth reverence the most profound, or confidence the most complete, will be discovered. Beyond that, nearly all is uncertainty; and the man that believes more, believes because he wishes to do so, not because he has a rational basis for his convictions.

It may have been noticed that nothing has yet been said regarding Golgotha; but, in truth, the New Testament contains nearly all that can ever be known concerning it. "The place called Golgotha, that is to say, a place of a skull," referred to by Matthew; "the place Golgotha, which is, being interpreted, the place of a skull," mentioned by Mark; Luke's "place which is called Calvary,"—a word which means in Latin what Golgotha means in Hebrew; and John's "place called

of a skull, which is called in the Hebrew, Golgotha," are now utterly unknown. The hillock is believed to have owed its name to its form; but whatever gave rise to the title, the spot has for ever faded away; the place where the Son of God was crucified and slain is unknown, like the grave of Moses. The same remarks apply to many other places called holy. The mere fact that so many of them are compressed together under one church roof, betokens a hardihood of imposture which would dare any fiction. The Christian has better helps by far than the true cross, or Pilate's inscription, or iron nails—he has the word and the Spirit of God; and it is because so many have not, or had not these, that multitudes have been the ready dupes of such lying legends.

It is difficult to form any accurate estimate of the riches of this church, or generally of the orders called religious in Jerusalem. Much that is tawdry and tasteless meets the eye, but a recent author* tells us that he was admitted to inspect the treasures of the Convent of Terra Santa at Jerusalem; and his accounts remind us of the descriptions which are given of the glittering sights which greeted the eyes of the Spanish invaders of Peru. In the convent just named the treasures of the Holy Sepulchre are secreted, owing to a feud among the religious sects, in which the Greeks challenge the rights of the Latins, and the Latins quarrel among themselves. When visiting the convent, that traveller was led into a remote room,

* Mr. W. C. Prime.

which gave him at first no warning as to the treasures which were at hand. When exposed, however, they amazed him by their gorgeousness. One robe, a gift from a king of Spain, cost 100,000 francs. The emperor of Austria and the king of Naples were also represented by their gifts; but Napoleon I. overtopped them all. He bolstered up the superstition which he despised, and sometimes trod upon, by a priestly robe said to be worth half a million of francs. Lamps, superbly chased, in gold and silver, were pendent from the roof of a closet; and in drawers below them were the jewels of the patriarchate, diamonds, emeralds, and rubies, flashing, as the traveller rather grandiloquently narrates, "upon superb crosiers and heavy rings;" but the narrative should be given at length, and in his own words.

"In one corner of a large room," he says, "lay a huge pile, which appeared like the corner of a tin-man's shop and had not my attention been specially directed to it, I should have thought it a collection of old tin-ware, pans, and water-leaden-gutters, spouts, and such chandeliers as I remember to have seen of old in the church at Liberty. . . . This proved to be a heap of solid silver, more in weight, we believed, than half a ton, consisting of various church ornaments, and especially of huge candelabra, standing even seven feet high from the floor, wrought in beautiful shapes of the solid metal, and heavier than one man could well lift. Near this, some rough doors, on a temporary closet being opened, disclosed an altar or a shrine of the same white metal, pure, rich, and elegant, more than six feet high, and

four in breadth, wrought in Gothic and other forms, and beautifully chased and finished. It was a present from some crowned head in years long past, and has been treasured in a garret chamber of the convent from the day it was received. Whether it will ever see the light, is a question I cannot answer. It may lie there a hundred years, to be seen only by such chance travellers as Father Stephano shall be induced to guide to the treasure-room."

Had the descriptions of this traveller upon some other points been less oratorical, a closer approximation might have been made to the value of all this hidden wealth. But according to his account, such are the riches of a Jerusalem convent—riches for which none can be prepared who have marked the nastiness and squalor of many of the monks.

Before leaving the subject of the Sepulchre and its church, we may advert to the motley aspect of its precincts, at some seasons of the year. The tables of the money-changers in the Temple of old were trivial things compared with this spectacle. In front of the church are found tables, spread with coffee, sherbet, sweetmeats, and other refreshments. Pedlers are there, and the vendors of holy wares from Bethlehem and elsewhere. Crosses, rosaries, amulets, and shells with scriptural subjects carved upon them, all solicit the regards of the pilgrim. Models of the sepulchre in wood, inlaid with mother-of-pearl; drinking cups made from the deposits of the Jordan, with scriptural legends upon them; and many other articles, are found in the square; while the groups are as variegated, and almost as grotesque

as Harlequin. Latin, Armenian, Greek, and Coptic friars, Turkish, Arnaout, and Arab soldiers, with languages which outstrip any known polyglot, all attract attention. It is, indeed, the study of the eastern world, where man can be contemplated in some of his most characteristic aspects. The effect of the whole, however, would be to desecrate the place were there anything sacred about it; and Lord Lindsay was right when he said, *if there be* any sacredness about such places at all, it is not because of their scriptural character, but in consequence of the crowds of earnest, though unenlightened men who have in all ages resorted thither. But how many have resorted thither, and so cheated their souls, instead of resorting to the Saviour, and so making sure of life everlasting!

As superstition, then, generally melts away at the touch of truth, like hoar-frost at sunrise, these holy places are now regarded as mere curiosities by many intelligent men. From the days of Dr. Clarke to those of Dr. Robinson, few have credited the clumsy legends, unless they have gone to Jerusalem bent on yielding to emotion, not truth—the devotees of superstition, not the disciples of God's word. The problem which the abettors of such deceptions had to solve was obviously this: Given a certain limited space, it is required to compress into it the events which must have happened over a much wider area; and that problem was solved at the expense of scriptural history and true religion. At the same time, the Church of the Sepulchre should be visited by all whose "feet stand within Jerusalem." There are lessons to be learned there concerning man's

willingness to be duped, and the power of false religion, which are not so easily learned amid any other scenes. One intelligent traveller said, as he gazed on these sights : " We seemed to realize it as a fact that we were literally in 'Sodom where the Lord was crucified.'" No doubt, men with certain ecclesiastical leanings would admire the apparent union of all sects here, as they seem to meet and to blend around this spot deemed sacred, and there appear to venerate the one Lord, though he was neither crucified nor buried here. But no real good can flow from a congeries of falsehoods—from figment heaped on figment till the mass be at once ridiculous and offensive; and the scenes not seldom witnessed around that reputed sepulchre are precisely what might be expected to flow from these numerous and many-coloured errors—the shame of Christendom, were such things Christian. This much, however, is certain,—the time will come when what is here beheld in mocking caricature, will be witnessed in living reality; and when brethren shall indeed dwell in unity, as they live by faith.

Though reluctant to linger longer upon such a subject, there is one heinous offence, not merely against pure religion, but against common decency, annually perpetrated in this church, which should not be passed over in silence. We allude to the crowning imposture of the Greek fire. It is meant to represent the descent of the Holy Ghost at Pentecost, and superstition seems to culminate in this appalling deception. It is annually wrought in the pretended sepulchre. Frantic crowds roam and rave through the church; and on the Saturday

of Easter week, according to the Greek computation, amid processions and pomps which are themselves an insult to the truth, preparations are made for the juggle. "The Bishop of the Fire" enters the sepulchre, and then the crisis hour soon arrives. The worshippers wait in breathless anxiety, and sometimes with no common symptoms of impatience, till a flashing light within proclaims that the miracle has been wrought—the deception is complete—fire has come from heaven! Forward rush the impassioned devotees to light their candles at the holy flame, and in that rush many perish. On one occasion four hundred fell under the bayonets of a guard of Turks, who attend to preserve something like order; but the whole scene and all its accompaniments are so revolting that one gladly escapes from the mere recital. It seems as if Satan were here doing his utmost to stamp out the Truth.

THE VIA DOLOROSA.

This is a street in Jerusalem well known to the traditions, but utterly unknown to true history—crowded with relics, and myths, and fictions, but withal unworthy of notice, were it not as illustrating the spirit which now reigns among the people called Christians at Jerusalem. According to some, the Via Dolorosa is first mentioned in the fourteenth century, and is meant to represent some of the more remarkable events connected with the crucifixion, or the Saviour's procession from the Judgment Hall to the Cross. Along this way, tradition alleges, the Saviour then walked, and at dif-

ferent places, or "Stations," fourteen in number, his sufferings are represented; for example, his falling under the cross, and similar incidents real or invented. At one place an arch crosses the street, called the arch of the *Ecce Homo*; for there, according to the legend, Pilate united with the Jews in mocking the Saviour, exclaiming—"Behold the man!" At another place where the Sufferer fell, his shoulder, or the beam of the cross, left an impression on the wall which remains to this day; and so through an absolute plethora of fictions. The houses in the street are comparatively modern. Intelligent men at once give up the whole as a huge fabrication, though others are found who contend for the authenticity of all the fourteen Stations. But the Churches which substitute Bacchanalian orgies for worship,—and such appalling impostures as that of the Greek fire for miracles—may well deem all other impostures trivial.

Yet, were it only to show more clearly under what masses of moral rubbish mind is crushed in Jerusalem, it were well perhaps to submit some more exact account of this "Way of Grief"—this model of man's walk through life. It consists of portions of several streets, and parallel with it is another narrow path, which Mary the mother, is supposed to have travelled while the Son was in the broader one. The Via proper commences in the street which leads up from the Gate of St. Stephen, on the east side of the city, and not far from the spot believed to have been occupied by the Tower of Antonia. Pilate's House or Judgment Hall is there pointed out. Close to the spot where Jesus fell for the

first time is another where he exclaimed, "Hail, Mother!" and round that poor invention superstitions cluster with amazing fondness—it is a kind of basis for the Ave Maria of the Papacy. Next, at a slight curve in the street which leads from the Damascus Gate, Simon the Cyrenian was compelled to carry the cross; and though He was thus relieved, the Saviour there sank exhausted once more. Then, near this point, the house of Lazarus is shown; at a short distance that of Dives—the one as well lodged, thereat least, as the other. Soon thereafter men point out the abode of Veronica, who gave the Saviour her handkerchief to wipe his brow; which he returned stamped with his image—an image which is now worshipped in St. Peter's at Rome (and perhaps a hundred other places), with a veneration which multitudes do not show to the Redeemer himself: and those who have seen cardinal, bishop, priest, and people, prostrate before that sham relic, can understand the dark depths into which the forgeries of former generations have thrust down the mind of the present. From that Via Dolorosa, "the Stations"—a Papal rite of marvellous efficacy—has spread far and wide. It may be witnessed in the arena of the Coliseum and elsewhere in Italy, everywhere depressing man lower and lower, and rivetting the chains which superstition has wreathed round the soul.

In the same neighbourhood in Jerusalem, the alleged home of Mary the mother of Jesus is shown. The place of her death is also pointed out. The Coenaculum has been already noticed; but all these, and a thousand more, are to be swept away without a

moment's hesitation. An English visitor when traversing Jerusalem was shown a house in which he was told Napoleon Bonaparte had dwelt. In reply to the question, When? he was assured that it was "in the time of our Lord!"—and that information was just as veracious as much that is current in Jerusalem.

It is well that a believer's hopes repose upon a better foundation than such legends supply, else the glaring and clumsy figments of the Holy City would make infidels of all thinking men. Such impostures are too solemn to be ridiculous, and yet too absurd not to be spurned away. "Enough of these absurdities," exclaims one. "Enough for the present of these scenes of fraud, folly, and shame," exclaims another; and though the Christian visitor may extract good even from them, the first impression is one of pain.

Extract good! How? How extract good from falsehood? How derive any benefit from what may well make thinking men ashamed? Is it not good to be able to test such things by the Great Guide-Book? to find our religion *there*, not here? to sit in sober judgment upon all that lies outside that volume, and say, "I know in whom I have believed?" That is our prerogative as soon as we understand the Bible, and commit the mind to the guidance of its truth. It judges all things, but is itself judged of no man. It is high above the highest, and it is good to have that fact pressed upon our notice, as it often is in the streets alike of Jerusalem and of Rome. What revolutions would follow the ascendancy of that Book in either of these cities! What lies would vanish away!

From a fictitious way of dolor, the visitor to Jerusalem may pass to a real one.

THE WAILING-PLACE OF THE JEWS.

It is one of the most touching scenes in Jerusalem. The Jews are there permitted to purchase the right of lamenting over the long desolations of their city, in sight of some of the remnants of its former grandeur—a portion, it is believed, of the ancient Temple court. The spot lies on the western exterior of the area which surrounds the Great Mosque, and is approached only by a crooked lane, which terminates at a wall in a very contracted space. The lower part of that wall is composed of some stones which are believed to have formed part of ancient Jerusalem; and in sight of these, the people to whom the very dust of Zion is dear assemble to wail and to pray. “Two old men, Jews,” writes Dr. Robinson, referring to his visit to the place, “sat there upon the ground, reading together in a book of Hebrew prayers. On Friday they assemble here in great numbers. It is the nearest point in which they can venture to approach their ancient Temple; and, fortunately for them, it is sheltered from observation by the narrowness of the lane, and the dead walls around. Here, bowed in the dust, they may at least weep undisturbed over the fallen glory of their race, and bedew with their tears the soil which so many thousands of their forefathers once moistened with their blood.”

Some who have visited this place—consecrated at once by grief, by long centuries, and most dreary memories—

have described the scene in very touching terms. Men, women, and children of all ages, from little infants up to patriarchs of fourscore, crowd the narrow enclosure, which is only about seventy feet long, by perhaps twenty broad. They press their foreheads against the beloved stones, and, after the crowd has dispersed, the grave and reverend men who linger behind sometimes weep sore for the hurt of the daughter of their people. Their tears drop to the very ground; and when about to leave the place, their face is still turned back, as if their hearts cleaved to that wall. Some of the more earnest devotees appear to be unconscious of any presence but that remnant of Jerusalem. "The scene," exclaims a traveller at least as fervid as judicious—"the scene was one not to be witnessed elsewhere on all the earth—the children of Abraham approaching as nearly as they dared to the holy of holies, and murmuring in low voices of hushed grief, and in sobs of anguish, their prayers to the great God of Jacob. Some kissed the rocky wall with fervent lips. Some knelt and pressed their foreheads to it. Some prayed in silent, speechless grief, while tears fell like rain drops before them." Some may suppose the scene to be over-described; yet, who will not sympathize with the down-trodden children of Israel in the city of their fathers? The majesty of their grief demands respect from every human heart. Yet is there not a remedy? Has it not been said, that neither on Gerizim nor at Jerusalem are men to worship God, as a local God, any more? Nay, they are to worship him everywhere, and always in spirit and in truth, or he is not worshipped at all. And need we wonder,

even while we may profoundly sympathize, when truth discarded ends in woe endured?—when God resisted, ends in sorrow crowding upon sorrow?

But, passing from this view, the practice here referred to is at least seven centuries old. It is said to have continued from the twelfth century, and perhaps from a still earlier period. Driven from the city by the Emperor Adrian, and permitted by Constantine to approach near enough only to behold it from the nearest hills, the Jews were at length suffered to enter it on a certain day of each year, and to purchase an immunity from Roman soldiers to weep as they do still over their prostrate glories. Strange, but instructive, that even such sorrow could not teach them “the wisdom which comes from above!” Surely in every aspect, and at every stage in the Jewish history, we read a comment on many a portion of the word, when we see that the nation once the most favoured is now the most sorely tried.

But where do these woe-worn Jews reside in Jerusalem? Are they on a level with the rest of the inhabitants? Their yearnings for the Holy Land are indescribable. “The air of that land makes a man wise.”—“He who walks four cubits in the Land of Israel is sure of being a son of the life to come.”—“The great wise men are wont to kiss the borders of the Holy Land, to embrace its ruins, and roll themselves in its dust.”—“The sin of all those is forgiven who inhabit the Land of Israel.”—These are some Hebrew sayings, which indicate the passion of the nation for the land of their fathers—blind, like other passions, but strong. What, then, is the condition of those Jews who dwell in Jerusalem?

It is abject and forlorn. They inhabit a portion of the city on the south, between the base of Mount Zion and the Mosque of Omar, called Harat-el-Youd. The men, deemed by some "the aristocracy of all the earth," as they are indeed beloved for the fathers' sake, appear in their ancient capital under a somewhat different aspect from that of their nation in other lands. Their number is variously estimated at from 3,000 to 11,000 souls—the first too low, and the second too high. They have fourteen places of worship, which they call synagogues; but most of these are as poor as the worshippers themselves. The service there, as elsewhere, has little of the aspect of devotion, and, though the floors of these synagogues are sunk below the level of the ground, to indicate, it is said, the lowly condition of the tribes, the effects of their sorrow do not appear in earnest worship. One hears no cry like that of David of old, "O God, why hast thou cast us off for ever?" No longer, for the most part, in circumstances for displaying their proverbial avarice, or exercising their talent for over-reaching and amassing, they here groan under all the ills of poverty. They are not merely hated and reviled—they are paupers, at once an afflicted and a poor people, clinging to the skeleton of former greatness, but expecting little rest now, till they find it in the grave. They are supported by the contributions of their brethren, far and near; and were the tribes of the weary foot not reserved for some high destiny, their condition in Jerusalem would help to wear them out. They resort to it, however, to study the Talmud there, and then to lay their bones among those of their fathers in the

valley of Jehoshaphat. Zionward, the heart of every earnest Jew tends by a law apparently as universal as that of gravitation ; but read, in conclusion, what one has written regarding this passion,—

“ No clime can change,” he says, “ no condition quench that patriotic ardour with which the Jew beholds Jerusalem, even through the vista of a long futurity. On his first approach to the city, while yet within a day’s journey, he puts on his best apparel; and when the first view of it bursts upon his sight, he rends his garments, falls down to weep and pray over the long-sought object of his pilgrimage ; and, with the dust sprinkled on his head, he enters the city of his forefathers. No child ever returned home, after long absence, with more yearnings of affection ; no proud baron ever beheld his ancestral tower and lordly halls, when they had become another’s, with greater sorrow than wrings the heart of the poor Jew when he first beholds Jerusalem.” The Bloody Mary said, upon her death-bed, that when she died, the name of Calais would be found written on her heart ; and the saying is true, in spirit, regarding the Jews and Jerusalem. The further we see into the history of these monumental people, two things more and more vividly impress the mind : first, that the word of God is his indeed, and dictated by one who saw the end from the beginning ; secondly, some grand future yet awaits the tribes, who find their meetest emblem in the bush burning but not consumed.

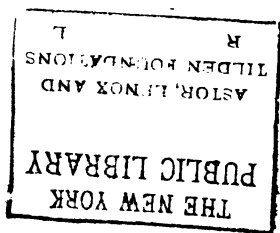
THE MOSQUE OF OMAR.

This is by far the most magnificent of all the buildings in modern Jerusalem. Whether as it is seen from the summit of Olivet, or as examined in detail, as far as Christians are permitted to examine it at all, it is of exceeding beauty; and could we forget that it crowns Mount Moriah, that it superseded the Temple of the true God there, and is, next to Mecca, the stronghold of the imposture, Islam, our satisfaction at the sight would be nearly all that such things can supply.

As in the case of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, the Christian rival of the Mosque, we need not enter into any very minute or detailed description. A mere outline is all that need be attempted.

In the year 636, the Mohammedans, under Omar, took possession of Jerusalem, and the Caliph determined to build a mosque on the site of the Temple. It was done, and some suppose that the present fabric is that which he erected. Others, however, allege that it was begun in the year 680, and completed in 687. During the Crusades, the building changed masters as the city did itself. In 1187, when Saladin retook Jerusalem, the Crescent again supplanted the Cross. That champion of Islam took part in person in the ceremony of purifying the place; and from that day to this the Mosque has been in the hands of the Mohammedans.

It is with no common feelings that one contemplates this pile, which is really graceful, at least as seen from a distance. The associations connected with its site





MOSQUE OF OMAR.

are rivetting. There the offering of Isaac virtually took place. There David would have built, and there Solomon did build, a house to the Lord. There the daily sacrifice, and thousands of others were offered. There was the Salem of Melchizedek, the threshing-floor of Araunah the Jebusite, as well as the Temple of the most high God; and though the Mesjid-el-Aksa and other buildings have supplanted all these, their beauty has reconciled some of the devotees of art to the change. The Mosque is an octagon of sixty-seven feet on each side. The walls are constructed of diversely coloured marbles, rising forty-six feet from the ground, and there supporting a circular wall which rises about twenty-five feet further. Upon this the dome is reared, about forty feet higher still; so that the height from the basement to the summit of the dome is about 110 feet. Inscriptions, in a sort of porcelain mosaic, encircle the walls, and the effect of the whole is imposing in the distance. Indeed, of all the sights about Jerusalem,—we mean the sights which man has originated,—none is more attractive than the Grand Mosque. Were it “holiness to the Lord,” and not a stronghold of impotence, perhaps the very strongest on the face of the earth, the pleasure which it yields would be without alloy.

The rock which gives one of its names to this structure, or Kubbet-es-Sukrah, “the Dome of the Rock,” is loaded with rival traditions. It stands out in the centre of the building, in the marked deformity of a huge mass of Jerusalem limestone, surrounded by an iron railing, and canopied with cloth; and though the whole is

now trodden down of the Gentiles, yet, as no doubt can exist that this is really a portion of Mount Moriah, it possesses all the interest which can attach to a spot so historical. Superstition, indeed, may actually have adored it, as the poor demi-savage of the jungle adores the stone to which he daily prays for protection against his neighbour, the tiger; but still it is a bit of Mount Moriah—that much, at least, seems veritable fact. The rock is about six feet above the floor of the Mosque, of an irregular shape, about fifty feet long by forty broad. The interior decorations of the structure are said to be gorgeous, and some portions are so antique in appearance that many, without hesitation, aver that they are fragments of the Temple itself. Underneath the building there is a crypt, which some deem the holy of holies; but Christendom is not unlikely to be ere long surprised by discoveries made in the under-ground world at the site of the ancient Temple.

Here also, however, we must have tradition and legend. The rock just mentioned is believed to hang in air, about seven feet above the ground, supported by no wall; in short, its position is the result of a perpetual miracle, and the origin of that wonder is as follows: Mohammed had occasion to rest on this rock. He rode from Mecca to Jerusalem in a single night, and after resting at this spot he started for heaven, commanding the enamoured rock, which was about to follow him, to remain suspended where it had begun its flight. It is just such an imposture as is practised by all the false systems, Islam, Hinduism, Popery, and others, from day to day.

Some allege that the Mosque contains the ark of the covenant. The stone which formed the pillow of Jacob, that on which the angel stood when about to destroy the city (2 Sam. xxiv. 16), and other relics, are also said to be there; and the Jews, in consequence, still make this the centre of their hopes. To Mohammedans it is second in sacredness only to Mecca, and many nominal Christians seem to offer it a homage as profound and sincere as they. The Mosque itself is second only to that at Cordova in Spain; and its enclosures, its olive, orange, and cypress trees, its reservoirs and fountains, with its inlayings, beautiful but hastening to decay, are all loudly eulogized. The seat on which Mohammed is to sit to judge the world (a fragment of a broken column) is there, besides many antiquities, crypts, and vaults, which are punctiliously kept from Christian inspection. In recent times, however, some have been admitted—Richardson in 1818, Bonomi, Catherwood, and Arundale, in 1833, and increasing numbers in more recent times. By the help of these explorations, the antiquities of the Temple become better and better understood; but the chief conviction that rises in the mind at such disclosures is, that they betoken the advent, slow it may be, and distant yet, of that day when the abomination shall be swept from the spot, and when He whose right it is to rule shall take possession of all his own.*

* In exploring at no little peril, and with enthusiastic pains, the crypts and recesses below the Mosque, Dr. Barclay discovered, among other things, a prodigious tank or cistern, about 750 feet in circuit,—a depôt of water for the Temple service, and supplied, it is believed, by the water

Near the Gate of St. Stephen, on the east side of the city, we find what some regard as—

THE POOL OF BETHESDA,

though others are sceptical as to the propriety of the name. The evangelist John records that there was "at Jerusalem, by the sheep market [or gate], a pool which is called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda, having five porches" (chap. v. 2). These porches were designed for the accommodation of the sick who resorted thither on account of the healing power of the water as described by John. The place now called the pool is a large reservoir outside of the enclosure round the Temple mount, but it has been dry for 200 years and more. The east end of the basin is close to St. Stephen's Gate, and the whole measures three hundred feet in length by one hundred and thirty in width, and seventy-five in depth, exclusive of the rubbish heaped up in the course of ages. The sides are faced with stones and plaster, and some arched vaults at the western extremity appear to connect the place with the porches mentioned by the evangelist, though many doubts are suggested by an examination of the spot.

But we need not enter far into the antiquarian inquiries raised by this subject, nor detail the different suggestions in regard to Bethesda. While some argue keenly for this spot, others suggest the Fountain of the

brought from Solomon's Pools by the aqueduct which passes Bethlehem, and is found to disappear beneath a wall beside the Haram, or Mosque enclosure.—*City of the Great King.*

Virgin as that pool, while another class prefer for Bethesda the Birket-el-Hejjeh, a little outside the city walls to the north of St. Stephen's Gate. But whichever of these places shall eventually be found to be the true Bethesda, it may suffice to say that the place which at present bears that name is probably part of the trench dug near the Fortress of Antonia to render it impregnable, as Josephus has described. We must again, therefore, be contented with knowing the fact that *near this*, at least, the great Wonder Worker performed one of his deeds of mercy, and liberated a son of Abraham who had been bound by disease for eight and thirty years (John v. 2-9). If the conjectures which connect the present Bethesda with the Temple walls ever be authenticated, that will simplify the question. Meanwhile it is "a joy for ever," that He who wrought that cure eighteen centuries ago and more, is still doing greater things for the sons and the daughters of sorrow—even healing all their diseases, and redeeming their lives from destruction.

In these brief sketches of the City of the Great King, its ruins and its sadness, we have seen again and again how the whole place is overlaid by legends, and we can easily discover a final cause why it should be so. The builders of Babel, in their ambitious projects, were baffled by "God only wise," when their speech was confounded, and their plans turned into foolishness. With equal wisdom he has hid from men what was sure to minister to their native idolatry. Little, indeed, is known of the spots consecrated by the Redeemer's presence. Except in a general sense, nearly every one

of them is an arena for debate and nothing more. Superstition must be both abject and rampant ere it can credit the traditions. Men *have* become idolaters; for the doings and the creed of many in Jerusalem is as certainly idolatrous as the worship of any heathen god can be. Withal, however, God has in his holy providence so ruled all, that he will be clear when he judges men for these idolatries. He has concealed; they have pretended to discover,—but have only “sought out many inventions.” They are mad upon their idols. Their voracity for lying wonders is unutterable; and for all these, sin lies at their door. How blessed they who have fled to the Deliverer who came out of Zion—who rise from the Jerusalem of the cross to the Jerusalem of the crown—who have sat down at the feet of Him who is the Truth—or who have followed him, and refused to follow a stranger!

JERUSALEM UNDER-GROUND.

It is well known that many tombs are excavated in the solid rock around Jerusalem, and several of these have been already noticed. Under many of the houses also, or in connection with them, water tanks are found, some of them large and capacious; and excavations in the rock, or under-ground structures, are rife in the sacred city. Recent years, however, have brought to light a vast subterranean quarry, which is certainly one of the marvels of the place, and no account of Jerusalem can now omit a description of the monster crypt.

The only entrance yet used is by an opening not far

from the Damascus Gate, and close by the city wall. It is blocked up by stones and rubbish, but, these removed, access is obtained by a narrow passage, into which the visitor must creep and struggle forward as best he may. The descent from the end of the passage is some feet in depth, and then the floor of the cave is reached. All is rock, above, below, around, and the scene, as beheld in the only light that is available, namely, that which is carried in the hand of the explorer, is one of the most remarkable about Jerusalem. The floor is uneven, and walking somewhat perilous. At some points, water dripping from the ceiling forms stalactites, with their counterpart stalagmites, as may easily be supposed in a limestone region. The conviction of every visitor seems to be, that this is some primeval cave expanded into a quarry, where some of the stones are still *in situ*, partly cut from the rock, with the marks of the workman's hammer still fresh upon them. Others are ready to be removed; and piles of chips and rubbish indicate beyond a question what the purpose of the excavation was. Its proximity to Moriah suggests the thought, that it might be the quarry which supplied stones for the Temple,—that house which is described as being built “so that there was neither hammer, nor axe, nor any tool of iron heard in the house while it was in building.” Should this conjecture ever be authenticated, the coincidence would be one of the most remarkable yet detected in the Holy Land, teeming as it is with such apt collocations.

There are side galleries diverging from the main cave, which have not yet been fully explored; and when

these are all examined, more may be known of this excavation. Some have penetrated to the distance of about seven hundred and fifty feet from the entrance. Others give different estimates of the extent of the cavern ; but at present we must wait for light.—It is known from history that there were deep hiding-places under the city of old ; and further explorings may tell us more upon the subject. Meanwhile, we leave this wonder as one of those which indicate how all things in that land—in the sky above it, and in deep caverns beneath—point in the direction of the truth of Scripture. We are not prepared to say more than that it is probable that stones for Solomon's Temple may have been taken from this quarry ; and if so, how luminous does the narrative become of the noiseless progress of that erection ! Like the excavations of Nineveh and Shushan, shedding light on some dark places of Scripture, these deep recesses give verisimilitude, even from the natural, or material side, to the sacred narrative, while the spiritual aspects of the truth become brighter and more beautiful than ever.

CONCLUSION.

And thus do we close a glance at some of the peculiar attractions of the City of David.—The ruins of Ba'albec are a great mystery. Who built those noble piles ? For what were they designed ? Ten antiquarians would perhaps give ten different replies. And Palmyra, by the vastness, though not by the taste of its remains, surpasses even Ba'albec. Petra, Pestum, Athens, Rome,

Baïæ, and a hundred other scenes, all appeal to our pity, and touch our hearts. But for Jerusalem we can only, like her own captives of old, hang the harp upon the willows and weep; or, like her king, "cry out of the depths" on her behalf. Wherever we gaze in Jerusalem, the eye rests on desolation—the very Mosque is the abomination of desolation. The city seems clothed with a pall; and yet to it and its sacred scenes we are attracted as if by a spell. We cannot venture to predict what is to occur in the course of ages, or tell what may be the effects of those tendencies which are still carrying men literally in ship-loads to Palestine, and its capital. But this is certain: from year to year, the prostrate city is becoming better known, and more attractive to the Western nations. The truth as it is in Jesus has made some progress, though, for obvious reasons, not much; and if the relaxation of Moslem fanaticism lately granted by the Sultan be carried out in good faith, we or our children may yet see marvellous things in Jerusalem and the Holy Land.

Meanwhile, and in conclusion, we observe, that in Palestine in general, but especially in its capital, the question often occurs, Do the Moslem give honour to the Saviour? Are they in any sense predisposed towards him? Job and Abraham, David and Solomon, with all the great names of the Old Testament, are deferred to, although their writings are corrupted, and their religion yet more. To what extent, then, does this deference or homage apply to the Redeemer? He also is deemed a prophet, and second only to Mohammed. The Koran places that "Beau Sabreur" *first*, but

it neither ignores nor denies the prophetic power of Jesus. He is not allowed to be divine, but his crucifixion, by the substitution of another in his place, is conceded. His ascension to paradise without tasting of death is believed by some, but denied by others; and all orthodox Mohammedans are said to believe that Jesus will return to this world before the judgment, will die, and be buried beside Mohammed. Such are some of the raving incoherences of Islam regarding the Son of God; and these opinions have led some to regard it rather as a corruption of Christianity than as an unmixed delusion. The Socinians have even overtured the followers of the impostor on the subject of their common views. But the doctrine of atonement, with all that it pre-supposes and implies, is resolutely denied; and Islam is thus detected as hopelessly, irremediably, and utterly a falsehood—it leaves man without one single hope.

Again, a visit to the Land of Promise, so long the land of griefs and of oppressions, furnishes a thousand proofs and confirmations of the Bible. It is, indeed, a second Bible, all responsive to the first. Some have been afraid to visit that land, lest the halo of glory which environs the Saviour should be dimmed by familiarity there, should lose its power by proximity, and leave the mind in doubt. To walk the streets which Jesus walked—to climb the hill which Jesus often climbed—to look up to the same stars from the same spot where Jesus beheld them—to wander by the Jordan, or dwell at Nazareth, or sail on Gennesaret—to sojourn at Bethany; or walk to Bethlehem,—might not

these tend to dissipate what is celestial in our associations with the Blessed ? Some have thought so, but the reality has been different from the fear. The truth of God has stood out in more vivid prominence—it has seemed more and more his truth amid the sights and scenes of his favoured land. Buttress after buttress was discovered, which fortified the faith of those who had faith at all ; and though he told the truth who said so sadly—

“ We roam by Jordan’s sacred tide,
And weep by ruins grey ;
For who would care his tears to hide
Near Judah’s sad decay ? ”

the whole is still a grand demonstration that God is in the Bible of a truth. It is thus the best guide-book to the Holy Land, as the Holy Land is one of the best commentaries upon it.



JERUSALEM

AND ITS ENVIRONS.

THE ENVIRONS OF JERUSALEM.

EXCURSION I.

THE MOUNT OF OLIVES.

It is a very instructive fact, that at one period the very name of Jerusalem had perished from the lips of men. During the first half of the third century it was superseded by that of *Ælia*, derived from one of the Roman emperors ; and when that city which had once been the joy of the whole earth was mentioned by any one who knew somewhat of its history, men had actually to ask where Jerusalem had stood ! The Jews were long prohibited, under pain of death, from approaching their ancient capital, which to all the world but them literally retained only “the shadow of a name.” Slavery with all its miseries, and the contests of gladiators at Bether, at Banias, at Rome, and elsewhere, where the captive Jews were butchered in crowds to make a Roman holiday, had done their terrible work. Wild beasts of the forest often found a kinder reception from man than the abject children of Abraham, and hence the name of their capital perished from the memories of men.

But all that has changed many centuries ago. In our day, at least, a thousand facts attest that the very dust of Jerusalem is dear to many. They never weary of her strange, eventful history, and never cease lamenting for her long catalogue of woes. The future destinies of that city at whose ruins we have just come from glancing, are bound up with the interests and aspirations of all the nations of the earth. Little as men think it, the destinies of our world are strangely mixed up with the destinies of the Jews. Some mysterious future is theirs, and grand as mysterious, and we are now to deepen the interest already felt, by some Excursions to remarkable places around the Holy City.

The Mount of Olives has already been repeatedly referred to, but a more deliberate visit than has yet been paid may not be without some good result.

It is well known that no spot near Jerusalem, and few in Palestine, can be more favourable for a wide and panoramic view than the summit of Olivet. Thither every traveller is sure to resort, perhaps on the very evening of his arrival in the city of the Great King. Indeed men rush to it as to the Forum or the Capitol in Rome, or to Mars' Hill at Athens, and the place is visited again and again, till it becomes, in some measure, a second home to the wayfarer, at once on account of the beauty of the scene, the sacred associations that gather round the Mount, and the wide range of prospect which it affords over the mountains, seas, and rivers of the goodly land.

Let us suppose, then, that the tourist has ascended that height at morning or at evening, to see at a glance

such scenes as could nowhere else in the world be seen. He has passed the brook Kedron, he has glanced along the Valley of Jehoshaphat, and admired the position of Mount Zion, and its flanking battlements. He has perhaps turned aside for a first look at the Pool of Siloam, and may have lingered for an hour or two near the spot where Gethsemane must have been, whether the lonely and solemn, but all too modern claimant for the honour be genuine or spurious. In that brief walk that visitor has already trod where David, where David's Lord, where the apostles, and many whose names are in the Lamb's Book of Life, have trod before—he has reached the structure called the Church of the Ascension, though it is well known that the Saviour did not ascend from that spot at all, and now there is spread out before him a thousand scenes familiar from boyhood, and at length beheld, perhaps through tears. Below the Mount is the sacred city, with its domes, minarets, towers, and fortifications, imposing even in its decay—wearing the aspect of a deserted place, yet drawing forth our deepest sympathy for the same reason as that which constrains us to pity the fatherless and the widow. From the minaret of the mosque which has usurped the chief honours of the Church of the Ascension, the glance over Judea is grand. On the east, and in the far distance, perhaps five-and-twenty miles away, are the mountains of Moab, the eastern boundary of the Dead Sea, among which we must look for Nebo and Pisgah, if they are ever found at all, as well as many other spots celebrated in the early history of the Hebrews, from their wars with Moab, and their

crossing of the Jordan, down to the last days of their existence as a people. At some points the visitor can trace from this pinnacle, the Valley of the Jordan, chiefly by means of the deeper green which fringes it, although that demands a peculiar state of the atmosphere to favour the view. The glittering surface of the Dead Sea can also be seen to a limited extent—and here for the first time is that mysterious abyss beheld by many a western eye. It is well known that that sea, the absorbent of a large river, for which it never renders any account, is depressed more than 1300 feet below the level of the Mediterranean. The minaret on Mount Olivet cannot be much less than 3000 feet above that level, so that in looking across the fifteen or twenty miles which separate us from the Dead Sea, we are looking down into an abyss about 4300 feet deep. Its shores have for ages been the haunts of fierce Bedawin, whose pastime is war, and whose livelihood is plunder. Yonder stood Sodom and Gomorrah, and there fire from heaven did the work of the Almighty, while the horrors of the final day were rehearsed.

In the foreground of this picture, and a little to the north, lies the wilderness of Judah, wild, rocky, and scarred with ravines not a few. Within that space many of the wonders of the wonderful people befell. A quick eye may discern, for example, the outline at least of the high land near Engedi, "the fountain of the goat," and other scenes which are prominent in the adventurous life of David on his way to the throne, or even after he had been crowned. Even though we leave out of view all that is legendary or questionable, we have

here a field of view which is crowded with objects so interesting as to be exciting. The very pathways which leave the capital for Bethany, for Jericho, and other places, have charms not a few ; for He who lived as never man lived, and spake as never man did, has often trod them all. Far away, in yon dim distance, near the Jordan, he was probably tempted, (Matt. iv.) Nearer at hand he wept over Jerusalem, and foretold its doom. In brief, half an hour's contemplation of these regions from such a spot will teach one more about the Holy Land than a hundred volumes, or a thousand antiquarian discussions about worthless traditions.

Yet the prospect Jordanward is melancholy. One cannot but recall the fertility of Jericho, the proverbial richness of its plain, and its magnificence when Herod the Bloody made it his home. Now how waste and dreary !—a desert instead of a garden,—rugged sterility instead of unstinted luxuriance. From the immediate neighbourhood of Jerusalem to Jericho the eye wanders over dreary desolation ; or if a green spot here and there diversify the waste, it is only to render the whole more saddening by the contrast.

From the same elevated point we may trace the view over some distance to the south. One can there see the hills which surround Bethlehem, and so wake up all the associations which cluster round that place. There prophecy upon prophecy was fulfilled. There the Desire of all nations appeared, lonely, yet profoundly honoured, —a source of terror even then to tyrants like Herod, as he has been a source of joy and rejoicing to ten thou-

sand times ten thousand from that time to this. The Frank Mountain is nearer at hand, environed with hills and deep ravines—the spot where the crusaders are believed to have made one of their last struggles before quitting Palestine. But without dwelling on aught so modern or so questionable, we need think only of Biblical associations—and as the eye ranges over the southern slopes of the land, the soul may be drinking in renewed vigour to its faith, while it grows in familiarity with the attractions of Palestine. That eye is tracing the scenes where the magi followed the new star—where they spread out their offerings, and where it became a literal truth, in terms of Solomon's exclamation of surprise, that God in very deed dwelt upon earth among men.

THE VIEW TO THE WEST.

Hitherto we have gazed at desolation from the minaret ; with the exception of the city below, scarcely a symptom of life or activity can be seen. Nearly the whole landscape is composed of dreary hills, wadies, rocks, ravines. But when we sweep round to the west or north-west, the visitor is regaled by sights long familiar to mind and memory—all now embodied before him. Yonder are Ramah and Gibeon, and there is the most prominent hill in the vicinity of Jerusalem, Nebi Samwil, or probably Mispah—at the distance of about two hours from the Damascus Gate. It was long regarded as the home of the prophet Samuel, and hence its name ; but more exact investigations make

the place the Mispah of Saul. Here also opinion is divided ; but whatever may be the ultimate decision, the mosque on that hill, which has superseded a Christian church, commands a view of the land from the Great Sea, west, to the Jordan on the east. Such is one " of the mountains which are round about Jerusalem," at once its defence and its glory. From that eminence the Mount of Olives is seen, and Jerusalem at its base. The Frank Mountain, Ramleh, El-Gib, El-Bireh, and many other places—Shiloh, and its long sacred vicinity, Bethel, now Beit-in, and other Biblical spots, are within the elevated range ; and if the wayfarer be a student of the Bible in spirit and in truth, he may study it here with a keener relish and a more comprehensive understanding of its histories.

Once again, however, and often, we must ask, Whence these sad desolations ? Whence these hill sides often so bleak and bare in our day—so terraced, and laden with rich productions in the days of old ? Whence these nameless ruins, or if named, why does groping superstition say one thing and the Bible another ? Men often marvel at the dreariness of the Campagna around Rome ; but is not nearly the whole of Palestine one vast Campagna, often leafless, seared, and deeply scarred with the ravages of eighteen centuries of woe and desolation ? The wonders of the scene are enhanced, when, in spite of all that desolation, the heart still clings to this blighted land as to a fondly-cherished home : we feel towards it as to a living being when it suffers. This survey from Jebel-et-Tur, the Arabic name for the Mount of Olives, is one which photo-

graphs the site and the environs of Jerusalem in the mind, and deepens all our sympathies with the abject, outcast Jews—

“The tribes of the wandering foot and weary breast”—

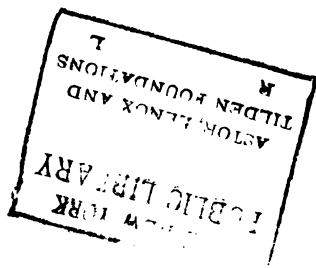
even though they and their country appear more vividly than ever to be monuments to Jehovah's justice or dread remembrancers of his unswerving truth.

EXCURSION II.

BETHANY.

To reach this sequestered place, we leave Jerusalem perhaps by the Jaffa Gate, and descend along the path, now somewhat familiar, to the brook Kedron. The ascent of the Mount of Olives then begins. It is perhaps only a pathway worn in the rock by the footsteps of many generations—or at some places cut into rude stairs to facilitate the ascent. From time to time the visitor will pause amid the sparse olive and fig trees of the mountain-side, to gaze on the scene of wonders before him—the past and the present vying with each other in suggestiveness and interest. The desolations of ages are there, the dire effects produced by man's oppression, rendered more manifest by contrast with the beauty of the scene when many a spot was like a well-watered garden—leafy, rich, fragrant, and productive.

And when the visitor in quest of Bethany reaches the eastward slope, a scene scarcely less touching of its





BETHANY

kind than the sight of Jerusalem, opens on his view. There is the road to Jericho, through a sterile country—the scene of the parable which tells of the wounded man who fell among thieves, of the priest, the Levite, and the good Samaritan—with all the incidents of a route dangerous eighteen centuries ago, and scarce less dangerous now. That visitor can here form an accurate opinion of the extent of this Land of the Book—and as he ranges over the narrow strip, much of which is now before him, he grows more and more amazed at the infinite associations crowded into that space—the wondrous works which it has witnessed, and its consequent influence on the destinies of men for all time, and all eternity.

But having reached the crest of the Mount, the traveller will continue to follow the footpath which leads him eastward, for in that direction he must find the village of Bethany. He has now lost sight of Jerusalem, for the crest intervenes ; a few patches of corn are seen on the slope, and the desert solitudes spread out far away in the distance. But the village is just at hand, embosomed in olive-groves, and, for this land, a pleasant place. The white tops of the Arab houses gleam through the green, and, at some distance at least, the whole seems beautiful—it is such a spot as Bethany ought to be. The orchards have the fig, the olive, the vine, the almond, and the pomegranate ; and altogether a home-feeling of love is perhaps the first result produced by the sight of Bethany, in those who know what multitudes do not—the meaning and the blessedness of *Home*.

But having reached the village, the visitor begins to be chafed and vexed by the impudent assiduities of the wonder-keeper of the place. He is led to a tomb, and told that it is that of Lazarus ; or to ruins, and assured that there stood his house. The Arab name of the village is El-Aziriyeh, from El-Azir, the Arabic form of Lazarus, and that is as it should be ; but after all, the glory has departed, and the monastery, which was early erected here along with the other ecclesiastical buildings reared at different times, rather desecrate than hallow the place. The village contains about twenty houses, and in the walls of some of them stones are seen which obviously once occupied a more honoured position ; but away from these things, and all the vulgar glare, or the stolid insensibility of the monks and Arabs to everything but superstition or money, the visitor seeks some quiet spot where he may recall and luxuriate amid the memories of the place. The heart here does the work of the whole man ; the mind is over-informed if it be devout, and the dreary aspect of the distant desert harmonizes well with the thought of departed glories.

But there is a kind of penance to which the visitor must submit, unless he be prepared to wage war with all around him. He *must* be led to the alleged abode of Simon the leper, of Martha and Mary, and to the tomb of Lazarus. The latter is a deep vault, which might have imposture written on its front,—a cellar, in truth, hollowed in the limestone rock. The descent is by four or five and twenty steps, but there is a feeling of discomfort connected with the mere

registering of such impudent deceptions, and one gladly escapes from them all to recur to the moral attractions which cluster round the place.

—Here He who had nowhere to lay his head sometimes found a resting-place after a day of toil.

—Here He, whom all his followers forsook in his hour of utmost need, found at times congenial and sympathizing friends.

—Here Jesus wept, “the man of sorrows,” in profoundest harmony with the children of tears. But here also he triumphed over death, and anticipated the resurrection.

Here, accordingly, the believer’s heart finds a spot to which he clings as to his home. It is not the attempts which have repeatedly been made by royalty to dignify the place by nunneries and convents; nor is it the costly churches which have been built at Bethany, to be in due time converted by the Arabs into stalls for their horses, or pens for their cattle, as at many other places in Palestine;—it is not even the vicinity of Jerusalem that the traveller thinks of here. In the distance he sees the hills of Moab and the dreary region around the Red Sea. Somewhere in this neighbourhood stood Bethphage, long sought for, and yet till lately sought in vain. But it is none of these things, nor all of them together, that can attract the visitor at Bethany. It is the fact that there the Saviour found his nearest approach to a home; there the rejected and despised found a welcome from loving hearts; and there all that he received was repaid (as ever) a thousand-fold, by the raising of Lazarus and the triumph over death. From that spot, moreover, He reascended to glory.

"He led them out as far as to Bethany; and he lifted up his hands, and blessed them. And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven. And they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy" (Luke xxiv. 50-52). To these things nothing need be added. Nothing is known of Calvary or its site; but it alone could surpass the attractiveness of Bethany.

And wherever we look, when in its vicinity, the eye comes home from "the wilderness of hills"—black, volcanic, and leafless—to rest upon this quiet, secluded spot. Even poetry halts—it seems to be prose, when it tries to describe the beauties of Bethany:—

"It seems a humble village: few its homes,
And few and poor its dwellers; cottage roofs,
Except one single turret, are they all!
Yet, save the neighbouring city, it were hard,
If Palestine were searched, to find a spot
On which the Christian traveller should muse
With fonder interest than Bethany."

—Here, as in the believer's heart, the Saviour is ever the great central object. The shores of the Dead Sea, the dreary region which now environs poor Jericho, and the desert on the south, all tell of decay and death; but this little hamlet—El-Aziriye, Bethany—proclaims to man, through all his generations, that Christ is the resurrection and the life.

BETHPHAGE.

This village has long been sought for in the vicinity of Bethany, but many sought in vain. Its position

became another arena for debate, and contending theories at once marred the associations and deepened the uncertainties of the place. There is a village, apparently deserted, named Abu-dis, at the distance of about a mile to the east of Bethany, and that has been deemed Bethphage by some. But more recent researches appear to assign its place between Bethany and the city,—that is, to the west, and not the east. But wherever Bethany, “the house of dates,” and Bethphage, “the house of figs,” may be ultimately placed in regard to each other, we must never forget that the whole region is charged with associations with our Lord, like a summer’s evening with the blended odours of many flowers. The fig and the olive are still there. The palm-tree and others have disappeared; but He, whose name is like ointment poured forth, becomes more and more a reality as these scenes are frequented. Hear him sending his disciples for the colt! Trace him along his journey down the slopes, with palm-branches for his canopy, hosannas for his music, and fickle crowds for his attendants. Then consider the eventful hours of agony, the last of his life of woe, and every step is a solemnity, every walk a procession to the better country. There may be sights which rudely jar with such thoughts. The poor, blinded devotee, who worships he knows not what; the stolid monk, with a spirit entombed in a materialism which he substitutes for worship; the nakedness of the land, its scarred and blighted aspect, all tend to depress. But, *sursum corda!* there is a rest on high, and a heaven where there is neither disaster nor blight!

EXCURSION III.

THE CONVENT OF SAINT SABA.

THE route to this retreat, the La Trappe of Palestine, leads through some scenes nearly as wild and as rugged as the place itself.

Mar Saba was founded in the fourth century, by the saint whose name it bears. Superstition was then rushing into the Church like the sea into a vessel that has sprung a leak. Asceticism had become a passion; and when men vainly dreamed that by abandoning the world, and by fleeing to a desert or a cell, they could escape from sin, or win a heaven, the easy and self-flattering substitute for holiness was greedily embraced. They forgot that ere they could escape from sin they must abandon self. While carrying *that* with them, they only changed one form of guilt for another.

Saint Saba, of whom many fabulous things are told, became a leader among these devotees. It is said that he led a vast number of anchorites, of a kindred spirit with himself, into the rugged gorge where the convent now stands, and has stood in various forms for fourteen hundred years and more. That gorge is formed by the brook Kedron, as it passes eastward to the Dead Sea. The adjacent rocks are honey-combed with caves, as in many parts of Palestine, and in these, as well as in the convent, the devotees were wont to lodge. As the institution is rich, it has often been pillaged during the revolutions which have swept over

Palestine, and not seldom have its inmates been massacred by the wild hordes who roam over the adjoining desert. Piles of martyrs' skulls, 14,000 they say, are shown there, to attest the truth of such havoc; and, even to this day, every precaution is needed to keep the convent safe from the cupidity and intrusion of the lawless Bedawin.

But this is anticipating. The Convent of St. Saba is about three hours' journey, or ten miles distant from Jerusalem. To escape from the peril of plunder by the way at the hands of the Arabs, it is requisite to travel in companies, or with a hired escort. After leaving the city by the Jaffa Gate, the traveller descends, at the Fountain of En-Rogel, into the valley of the Kedron, where the pathway for some distance lies. But he must soon prepare to face the steep ascent which bounds the valley, and ascend to a higher level—a work of toil, and some danger, if not to life, at least to limb, on account of the ruggedness of the path. All evidence of the vicinity of a capital speedily disappears. Mount Zion is visible from the valley below for a considerable space, and that reminds the visitor where he is; but the gloomy desolation, and the wild, unpeopled region which is traversed, tell more of volcanic rendings or the devastations of mountain torrents, than of a land once flowing with milk and honey. Crag answers to crag in wild echoes, and were the knolls or ravines covered with birch and copse, the Trosachs would be reproduced in Palestine. As it is, we have only precipitous rocks—a wilderness, at some spots without a tree or even a leaf. In brief, the traveller is here surrounded

with regions so wild that they suggest what has been said of the mountains of the moon—they are treeless, leafless, herbless.

Travelling that dreary region for nearly the whole of his journey, the visitor to Mar Saba finds himself at last in a scene so startling as to be appalling to some. It is like travelling among scorix, the outpourings of Vesuvius or Etna. The abyss in which the convent is built is yet more wild, and, if possible, more leafless than the surrounding desert, while the only symptom of life that the traveller sees is the tents of some roaming tribes who frequent the region, and whose poverty and squalor at once banish from the mind all the romance that gathers round the life of these wild sons of the desert. There is one—there are two, twenty, fifty. They seem to vie with each other in their misery and gaunt wretchedness—their wives their drudges, and their children reared as if they were soulless. One of the most sickening sights in the Holy Land is the treatment which abject woman generally receives from man.

The convent is the abode of a sullen silence which at first rather depresses the visitor. His feelings are not much relieved when he reaches the watch-tower of the convent, and such environments or defences as are needed in such a place for the security of the inmates. Cells cut out of the rock, terraces, and towers, a mighty maze, and all without a plan, here meet the eye, and may well suggest the thought—Oh, how much man will do, or forsake, or endure to work out a righteousness for himself! How few recluses have learned,

as the Scriptures teach, that if any man will not work, neither shall he eat! How much would have been saved to the world had men understood that it is not they—

“Who idly dwell
In cloister grey, or hermit cell,
In prayer and vigil night and day
Wearing all their time away,
Lord of heaven, that serve thee well.”

It would not be easy to convey an idea of this conventual pile by ink and types. Precipices four hundred feet high must be visited. The high walls for defence, the winding corridors of the convent, its massive church and chapels, its apartments for pilgrims, its tombs of the saints, its strict rules (forbidding, among other things, the admission of females within the walls), the beetling cliffs perforated by what now appears to be inaccessible caves, but once all inhabited, constitute a spectacle rarely matched even in the wildest abodes of the wildest devotees. True, even the wilderness does not in any measure imply safety. Witness these walls of great thickness, and at some points fifty feet high, as well as all the muniments required by the proximity of the desert. Even that perilous neighbourhood, however, cannot give life to the dull existence of monkery; and at Mar Saba all is monotony and tameness, except the grand ruggedness of the dell called “the Valley of Fire,” and the fortress-convent which adorns it. The thirty or forty monks who harbour in the place are so many subtracted from the productive labourers of the world; and that is nearly all their history. Pity that the wilderness of Judah should be rendered more

sterile still by the incubus of forty useless monks. From some points in the vicinity, Mount Hermon is visible.

"Certainly," a visitor to this place has said,—“certainly if there be a spot where the wildest dreams of imagination appear realized, it is within this convent, overhung and surrounded by horrid precipices, full of arched vaults and caverns, adorned with lamps and pictures of saints and martyrs, and all the paraphernalia of monkish inventions.” But to what purpose all these paraphernalia? Was Christ wrong when he said, “It is finished?” Did he leave his work so imperfect that monkery must complete it? Were his sufferings not enough? Must those of man himself be added? Is it not true that “the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin?” These questions, rightly pondered and scripturally answered, would sweep earth clean of all such systems as the Convent of Mar Saba helps to uphold. Of themselves such devotees might ask, like Samson, blind, and grinding in the mill at Gaza, “Am I not sung and proverbied for a fool in every street?”

The traveller should not leave the edifice without visiting the library. If he is not edified or instructed by what is there, he may at least gather lessons from what finds no place in these recesses. Were God's Book of Truth—so peculiarly the book of this land—but freely open, the whole of this scene would melt away like the mirage of the desert, or the snows of winter when the suns of summer shine.

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Mountains of Moab



PLAIN OF THE JORDAN FROM THE MOUNTAINS ABOVE JERICHO.

EXCURSION IV.

THE PLAINS OF JERICHO.

JERICHO and its vicinity were once a proverb for fertility. "The City of Palms," had few rivals in beauty or in riches. And though a difficulty may now be found in deciding precisely where it stood, there can be no doubt that it was once like a well-watered garden. The eulogies which its climate and its luxuriance have drawn forth from Josephus and others, might prepare us to expect a scene of Oriental richness; but the contrast of all these descriptions is what we are now to see.

In proceeding from Jerusalem to Jericho, the traveller in Palestine will probably once more select as his route the path which leads along the slopes of Olivet, by Bethany, and down into a district where some parts may seem to be blasted for ever, so dismal is the scene. Stern and wild the country appears to the eye; and, as already noticed, it was in this direction that robberies were rife of old, nor are they even yet a thing unknown. How could they be so, in a land where brigandage is the business of thousands?

Proceeding in detail, however, after leaving Bethany, the first object of interest is "The Apostles' Well," at about two hours, or from five to six miles from Jerusalem. It is supposed that at this fountain the apostles (and no doubt multitudes besides) halted to refresh themselves on their journey eastward, or when returning to the capital. In some other countries such a foun-

tain would not be much noticed, and such a gratuitous tradition would be discarded. But *here*, where all is bleak and bare, both scorched and scorching, the presence of a spring is a blessing beyond what can easily be computed; and we may, without hesitation, believe that this existed in apostolic times. Though the route which we are now travelling be wild and rugged, there are sights, fabulous or otherwise, which break in upon the dreary monotony. On the left, "the exceeding high mountain" of the Saviour's temptation is visible; that is, if tradition may be credited. It is known that He was baptized in the Jordan, just before he entered the wilderness to be tempted; and this is the scene selected by the monks. It is wild and rocky—exactly such a place as the power to "command the stones to be made bread" would be an enviable possession. In some *such* scene, at least, the Saviour passed through another stage of his exceeding great struggle, in working out the salvation of his people; and the caves for devotees, visible at many points far up among the rocks, attest how surely the monks believed that this was the place.

From the same rugged path along which the traveller here proceeds, he can, at some points, trace the Ghor, or the valley of the Jordan, conspicuous as it is amid the general blight, for the line of green which it forms along these dreary plains. Beyond it, and away in the distance, are seen the hills of Moab and Ammon, forming the constant sky-line in this direction, and never losing their interest, bleak and bare though they be, because of their connection with the house of Israel. Nor are other associations altogether absent. The inter-

secting wadies among those mountains were once the abode of a crowded, if not a busy population, and have been sung by him who could make even Arabic gutturals melodious. Milton spoke of—

“Rabba and her watery plain,
In Argob and in Basan, to the stream
Of utmost Arnon,
From Aroer to Nebo, and the wild
Of southmost Abarim: In Hesebon
And Horonaim, Seon's realm, beyond
The flowery dale of Sibma, clad with vines;
And Eleale to the Asphaltic pool.”

But these scenes are distant. Near at hand we enter the dreary Plains of Jericho; and that may be done by a pass of singular ruggedness, even for this rugged land. As we are now approaching the scene of the first achievements of the Hebrews after they had entered the Holy Land, the memories of their deeds come floating up from the past. The ruins and remains of aqueducts which are found at some places, the probable site of Gilgal, the certain site of Jericho and Ai, at length, perhaps, identified, at no great distance among the hills, all remind us of the early history of the people to whom God was a very present help. These dells have echoed to the sounds of the assailants when Jericho fell. Some of them formed the scene of the ambush by which Ai was taken, and the spot where Achan met his doom in the valley of Achor cannot be far away. Some relics of a former fertility may still be traced, and wherever there is water, there is a vegetation which needs only attention to become luxuriant. The accounts of this neighbourhood given by Josephus may, in some degree, be the dictates of Jewish partiality. The pleasant gar-

dens—the palms, whose fruit when pressed yielded a honey scarcely inferior to that of the bee—the balsam-tree, “the most precious of all fruits there”—the cypress, and the myrobalanum, were all found in abundance, according to the Jewish historian ; and all these he ascribes to the balmy air and the abundant waters. But the more glowing his accounts of the past, the deeper and the sadder the contrast between his encomiums and the present dreary condition of the Plains of Jericho. “A stunted and a languishing date-tree” is mentioned as the only memorial of the City of Palms. Yet the fig-tree is found there, and the traveller will study with care the Asher or Osher plant, a tree which the most judicious and observant explorers now hold to be that which produces the “apples of Sodom.” The fruit has a yellowish colour, and resembles an apple or an orange in size. Its interior is filled, at certain stages of its ripening, with a kind of dust which “explodes when pressed or struck, like a bladder or puff-ball, and is then too fragile to be carried far.” It grows also in the immediate neighbourhood of the Dead Sea, and hence, perhaps, the popular name of the Asher. Disputes and discussions prevail as to which plant, among several claimants, has the best title to be held as producing the apples of Sodom. It appears, however, to be settled as definitely as it is ever likely to be, that the Asher is the tree.

In the same plains is found the Nabk, a species of thorn which is very common in Palestine. It is believed to be the tree of which the crown of thorns was made, and its long, pliant branches give verisimilitude to the opinion.

That these plains, if properly cultivated, would be as productive as of old, is apparent from the fact already mentioned, that wherever there is water there is luxuriance. The Fountain of Elisha, for example, is here—undoubtedly that which he rendered wholesome by casting salt into it, as recorded in Scripture (2 Kings ii. 19–22). The modern name of the spring is Ain-es-Sultan ; and wherever it flows, fertility and verdure accompany its course. The word of promise is literally fulfilled—"There shall not be from thence any more death or barren land;" and the overshadowing fig-tree, with the rich vegetation which borders the stream as it runs to waste across a portion of the plains, might supply a hint to the men of Jericho how to fertilize or adorn their desolate valley.

If the visitor be adventurous, this is not an unsuitable spot from which to climb the adjacent mountain, by superstition called the Quarantania, the reputed scene of the Saviour's temptation (Matt. iv.), as formerly mentioned. The caves where hermits dwelt of old, and where Arab brigands have also found an asylum, are visible from the plains ; but most probably the stony wildness of the scene may have more attractions for Western minds than the hoary untruths of the monks. Along these plains, if anywhere in Palestine, we are brought into contact with scenes and places which are greatly more than classical. The hiding of the spies at Jericho, and the fruitless search for them by the men of that city,—their escape by the wall,—the crossing of the Jordan over against the place by the multitudinous host,—the memorial-stones at Gilgal,—the taking

of Jericho in a miraculous manner, its utter desolation, and the curse pronounced on him who should rebuild it,—down through all that followed in the Old Testament times, may be traced in this neighbourhood, with the Bible for a guide-book, and caution for its interpreter as to the exact localities. Or, if the wayfarer here prefer the times which the New Testament embraces, he may learn more profoundly than ever the goodness of Him who here gave sight to the blind, when others would have condemned them to silence. He may read of the salvation which came to the house of Zaccheus in the person of the Saviour; and though the legend as to the Tower of Zaccheus, now pointed out to the traveller at Jericho, must be instantly discarded, scene after scene will rise up to deepen the impressions of truth. For a time he may be saddened by the devastation or the solitude which surrounds him, but he may also become a better man—one more detached from earth and more allied to heaven.

Travellers often notice the contrast between the plains and the mountains of Palestine. The former, it is said, are nearly all retained by the Government in its own hands; the latter are held in fee simple, or nearly so, by their occupants and cultivators. The plains, accordingly, are wretchedly tilled, if tilled at all, by serfs who are often oppressed and pillaged; while the mountain sides—held by a somewhat superior class, more thrifty, and active, and intelligent—yield better returns, and do not so completely disgrace the Land of Promise. Altogether, the Plains of Jericho are a solemnizing scene. The associations connected with them rank among the

most profound even in the Bible. It is not the ruins of convents—these are trivial things; nor of sugar-mills and aqueducts, though these tell of modern neglect and decay: it is the wonders which God has wrought that awe us here, and that make Jericho appear very near to eternity and its God—Him who chose it as the arena of many of his marvels when establishing this fact upon earth: “THERE IS A GOD.” The man who trembles at His word may here fear and quake; for a region which once vied with the tropics in fertility, and vies with them still in its climate, is now desolate and bare. Why this Zahara now, compared with the fecundity of eighteen centuries ago, or even of more recent times, when the Saracens were ascendent here? Why do these plains appear to have been sown with salt, and given over to a sterility which even the Jordan seems unable to redeem? It all proclaims that God is true,—true to his threats as well as to his promises; and they alone are safe who set to their seal to that truth.

But from the Plains let us proceed in quest of the City of Jericho.

Were it not memorable in the past, there is little in the present but wretchedness to attract a moment's regard. Riha, or Er-riha, the modern Jericho, is described by all travellers as a collection of miserable huts, covered with stalks of plants and thorn bushes, and defended from immediate attack by the same materials. The population is under 200 souls. Close to the modern village there are mounds of ruins covering a considerable portion of the plain, and were these carefully explored, some light might be thrown on the history of

Jericho. Some suppose, however, that these have no connection with the ancient town, though the close proximity of the Fountain of Elisha, already mentioned, leaves no doubt that we are standing *near* the first possession of Israel in the Promised Land. Josephus places the Jericho of his day near the mountains to the west. Others suppose that mounds and remains near the fountain, and considerably removed from the hills, may represent the ancient city. Others still find it among the mounds just beside the modern Riha ; while another class, differing from all these, place Jericho near the mouth of the Wady Kelt,—believed by some, but denied by others, to be the “brook Cherith” of Elijah. Amid these conflicting opinions, the visitor may not be disposed, without excavating, very peremptorily to decide. He may rather rest in the conclusion, that as ancient Jericho was large,—as Cleopatra, Antony, and Herod, as well as the Saracens and Turks, strove, in their respective ages, to revive its industry,—these scattered mounds, as nameless as profuse, may be regarded as representing Jericho—the Jericho of different dates and generations.

The traditionists, Greek and Latin, are beset by no difficulties. They believe all, except what would confer some peculiar honour on a rival sect. The visitor to Jericho will accordingly be led to a tower which has for centuries been shown as the residence of Zaccheus the publican. Dismissing the legend, and ascending the fabric, he will find it a Saracenic structure about thirty feet square and about forty high, commanding a prospect up and down the Jordan at its broadest part,

and away to the mountains of Moab and the Dead Sea. In one direction the eye wanders away to Mar Saba and its gloomy gulf. A little nearer the south is the Weli of Nebi Mousa,—the pretended tomb of Moses. In the foreground fragments of ancient pillars may be seen, and some thickets of the Nabk, where the nightingale is heard, and echoes at least of former sweetness greet the ear. But, as a whole, “the divine region” is dreary and desolate now. “The City of Palm-trees” has melted away into a sorry hamlet; and the most lynx-eyed traveller searches for Jericho, but hitherto to a great extent in vain. The sugar-canes,* the palms, the opobalsam, the henna,—all, all have disappeared; and these miserable hovels, these haggard Arabs, these shameless women, and these scattered mounds, form all that can be found to represent the city where Cleopatra once revelled; where Herod once reigned, butchered, and died; and where the Son of God, on his mission of mercy to the sons of men, diffused the blessings which he brought from heaven. Most strange it is that there is reason to fear that, in that wretched village, the nameless abominations which drew down fire from heaven upon Sodom and Gomorrah are practised still,—that is, not far from the shore of the waters which engulfed the guilty cities. Can it be true that certain sins, like certain weeds, are indigenous to certain regions? or that, once planted, they cannot be extirpated?

* “There were, in fact, sugar plantations here long before America was discovered; and it is quite possible that this plant was taken from this very spot [Jericho] to Tripoli, and thence to Spain, by the crusaders, from whence it was carried to the West Indies.”—*The Land and the Book*.

It has been mentioned that "the brook Cherith" is supposed by some to be represented by the modern Kelt near Jericho. It may well be so, for it is a wild and rugged dell, of which a traveller says: "The gorge of the brook Cherith is very magnificent. I have seen none in Alpine scenery to equal it for wild and desolate beauty." We do not, however, push the opinion too far; but if this *be* the brook, we are here brought into contact, by association at least, with one of the most remarkable personages of history,—a man who, above most, lived, moved, and had his being in God. We hear the command, "Get thee hence . . . and hide thyself by the brook Cherith, that is before Jordan;" and we read the assurance that the ravens were to feed Elijah there. We see him in his retreat, solitary but not deserted, cast down but not in despair; for he is a man whose life is more than charmed,—his God is his sun and shield. Let the traveller, amid the wild precipices which skirt the brook—assuming the place to be identified—open at that chapter of the heavenward guide which shows Elijah entering on the scene without any announcement, mature in power and in office, like another Melchizedek, "without father, without mother, and without descent" (1 Kings xvii.) Let him follow all the mazes of the stream, or trace all the recesses on its margin. There Elijah lived; there he endured; there he was trained for higher things and higher. Thither his daily food was sent to him, not through the pores of the earth, but in the talons of a bird. There the Omnipotent employed another of his creatures to promote his purposes. There faith, fed by

the hand of God, was strengthened ; and there that lowly man was fitted for his struggle with Ahab and Jezebel,—with the priests of Baal on Carmel, and all their dark idolatries,—and for that terrible holocaust which he offered on the margin of the Kishon (1 Kings xviii). Not even the Jordan can surpass the Kelt, if it be the Cherith, in solemn associations ; nowhere is it made more plain that the Lord is a just God, and a holy,—a jealous God, who will not give his glory to another.

It were difficult to say whether a visit to Jericho be more saddening or instructive ; and some of the incidents in its history, though not scriptural, render it one of the most bloody of all the shambles where passion has rioted in ruin. Herod the Great had done much to adorn the place, but his atrocities made him hated ; and he knew it. When his end drew near, therefore, aware that it might cause joy to his subjects, he determined to disappoint them, and to turn their rejoicing into a wail. With that end in view, he summoned his nobles to the place ; he ordered them to be shut up in a hippodrome which he had constructed, and to be all put to death the moment that he expired. His sister, Salome, did not obey the tyrant's order ; but in all history, perhaps, no incident is recorded which more terribly illustrates the power of the tyrant's ruling passion strong in death. The Plains of the Jordan were then pouring into the lap of man, from their prolific bosom, a profusion which was more than Oriental. They formed a kind of garden of the Lord, and much that was good for food and pleasant to the eye was there. But amid

that teeming profusion man neither heeded nor feared Him who gave it all. The hearts of all men, as well as of Herod the Bloody, are proof against such profusion, —they are proof against everything but grace; and the Author of such luxuriant bounties was not merely neglected, he was disowned and defied.

The monster rather than the man who planned this atrocity had been consistent in his blood-guiltiness all through life. Augustus said of Herod that it were better to be his pig than his son;* and the king did what he could to verify the witticism. The merest catalogue of his crimes is appalling; and near the spot where this man, "great" at least in his guilt, passed away to his account, it cannot but impress us to recall in outline some particulars of Herod's life. He bribed Mark Antony to put Antigonus, king of the Jews, to death, to make room for Herod himself. Having thus waded to the throne through blood, he next proceeded to butcher all the partisans of Antigonus. He made Aristobulus high priest at the age of seventeen, and then, repenting of his appointment, caused him to be drowned in a bath. Next he had Hyrcanus, of the family of the Maccabees, put to death, at the age of eighty, lest he should assert a claim to the throne of Judea; and then, lest his wife, Mariamne, his favourite among the nine whom he married, should be espoused by any one after his death, he ordered her and her mother to be murdered if he died before them. He anticipated his own injunction, however, and destroyed Mariamne

* *ὅς*, not *ὁ* *ὄν*.

himself; and, after a brief period, murdered also her mother. Next, he caused his two sons, Aristobulus and Alexander, to be put to death; and his next atrocity was the slaughter of the children at Bethlehem. Further, he ordered his son Antipater to be destroyed for an attempt to poison his father—but we need not proceed. Such was the man who passed up to his account from the spot where these mounds, and fragments, and broken pillars tell of former grandeur. A curse seems hovering over the scene,—nay, it has descended with wasting force; and need we wonder, when we recall the atrocities at which we have glanced? One sin withered Eden and blighted a world; what, then, but calamities could follow Herod's crimes?

THE FORDS OF THE JORDAN—BATHING.

It was natural that superstition—the true horse-leech, which is ever crying “Give! give!”—should seize upon events so important as those which happened in the neighbourhood of Jericho, on the Jordan. The Israelites crossed the river there, and it is probable that Jesus was baptized in that vicinity, though the spot can never be ascertained. But what is not known can be feigned; and both the Greek and the Latin Churches make the alleged place of the Saviour's baptism the scene of some of their wildest doings. Here, as usual, they are rivals as to the bathing-place; but the superstition is equal; at each it is a gross lampoon on the simple truths of the word of God.

In a region so sultry and Oriental as the Plains of

the Jordan, where even the human frame, with all its adaptive facilities, often seems dried up, and converted into a heap of sinews rather than of muscles, the abounding river becomes a universal bath ; nearly all travellers from the West seek refreshment in its waters, and their encomiums on the virtues of the stream are loud and varied. The richness of the vegetation on the margin,—increased, no doubt, to the eye by the surrounding sterility,—the peculiarity of the Ghor, and the deep seclusion to be there enjoyed, are all dwelt on with great delight ; and one Western has said that to his exhausted frame, a bath in the waters of the Jordan was like the bath of the Mohammedan paradise.

But it is not to the solitary bath of a travel-soiled wayfarer that we now allude. We know that the Saviour was baptized by the Baptist *somewhere* in the Jordan. Crowds flocked to the great forerunner for the same purpose ; and a ceremony so grand was not to be lost sight of by the inventors of more modern superstitions. At the place selected by the Greeks the river is specially beautiful. It is an oasis of the richest type, fringed with a vegetation rank and luxuriant like that of the tropics. The thickets are dense and tangled ; for the mingling of tall reeds, of wild vines, and other clambering plants, renders the banks at some places a rich mass of vegetation. The bulbul is frequently heard among the foliage. The river is broad, and full, and rapid rather than otherwise, while some of the distant mountains dominating over the scene render it one of the most Oriental and most refreshing to be found all along the banks of the Jordan.

On the evening prior to the Grand Festival of the Bathing, the pilgrims, who have come from far and near, assemble on the Plains of Jericho, generally not far from the Fountain of Elisha. All manner of languages may there be heard ; all manner of costumes may there be seen. The band often consists of thousands, including Greeks, Armenians, and various tribes of the Greek rite. Abyssinia, Egypt, Asia Minor, Turkey, Greece, Malta, Italy, France, Austria, Poland, Prussia, Russia, even Britain and America, may all be seen represented in those motley groups. Cossacks from Russia, and Copts from Egypt,—devotees, in short, from many lands,—are attracted by a rampant superstition ; and their wild bivouac on the eve of the coveted plunge is such as perhaps the whole world besides could not match.

The viands of the different groups are described as peculiarly national. The Egyptian sups on an onion and a doura cake ; the Syrian devours his curds ; the Armenian his dates, or pickled olives ; the Cossack prefers mutton ; and the European or American, showing symptoms of civilization, both uses a box for a table and a variety of viands to please his more dainty appetite. When the night-fires are kindled, the effects upon these groups are picturesque beyond the power of words. Turbans, fez caps, scarlet robes, or shaggy capotes ; the huge beards and bare limbs of the Orientals ; the gesticulation, the vociferation, and excitement of nearly all, indicate that Superstition is here holding her highest carnival,—that man is here in his most fantastic, if not his most degraded character. To the Christian traveller such a scene would be amusing,

could he forget that it is meant for religion ;—it is all the religion that these pilgrims know. They are reputed followers of the Lamb of God. As men called Christians, they pretend to hold that religion of which the Bible is the visible fountain-head. To a man, they think they are on the way to a high religious ceremonial. It is one of their favourite stages in the journey to what they reckon glory, and how wretched is the deception we need not tell.

Very early on the morning of the high solemnity the torches are lighted on a signal given, and in a trice the whole multitude, to the number of thousands, are in motion towards the river. The Turkish governor of the district is there, attended by a band of music, and by peace-officers ; and some have likened the wild scene to the effect of enchantment, so sudden and so unanimous is the movement, or the rush towards the stream. Having reached the bathing-place, some plunge into the river, and disport like strong swimmers in the fulness of their joy ; others are more sedately sprinkled by attendant priests ; but all, except the emaciated and the dying, seem joyous or even jubilant, and leave the water to return to their tents at Jericho, like men who have reached a summit of earthly felicity, or accomplished a grand object of earthly ambition. Some relic of the spot is commonly carried away by each pilgrim ; sometimes the cloth destined to be the shroud or the winding-sheet of the devotee is dipped in the stream, and carried home as at once a trophy and a passport to safety ; and though all do not give such pleasing accounts of these scenes as the author whom

we at present follow, * there is not a little of boisterous hilarity displayed in the tumult.

Such sights will be pleasing or painful to the traveller, according to his own "manner of spirit." Does he look upon them from the world's point of view? Then they are just another manifestation of frolic, or mirthful excitement. But does he go deeper? Does he look upon them in the light which the Bible sheds on them? Then such doings as those at the Fords of the Jordan deepen man's degradation by pampering his superstition. They foster the delusion which substitutes a ceremony for a Saviour—or baptism in the Jordan for the washing of regeneration and the renewing of the Holy Ghost. Men greedily seek these poor shams and make-believes, but turn away from the truth which would direct them Saviour-ward—and by how much is all this better than the idol car of Juggernaut, or the saving plunge in the Ganges? If the Bible alone contains the religion of truth, where do we find *its* warrant for these scenes of riot? If reason must preside over the conduct of a reasonable being, *does* it, *can* it teach that to plunge the body in a stream, without any divine warrant, can

* Dr. Olin. Some describe the fighting even to bloodshed and death, the gross conduct of multitudes in the crowd, the necessity of the authorities to interfere by stripes, to preserve the peace, and the moral and physical abominations of the spectacle, as altogether revolting. Dr. Thomson, in "The Land and the Book," says of his visit: "Two Christians and a Turk, who ventured too far [into the stream] were drowned without the possibility of rescue This sad accident produced very little sensation among the pilgrims. In fact, this pilgriming seems to obliterate every benevolent feeling from the heart As we came along, if any poor woman fell from her horse, and rolled down among the rocks, it called forth only loud laughter from the passing crowd."

accomplish good in the soul? While the traveller in these parts has truth after truth impressed more vividly upon his mind, he also learns to cling more tenaciously to God's word, and nothing but God's word, as the source of his religion. This folly upon more than a national scale, of supposing that bathing in a stream can benefit the soul, is surely a plain demonstration of the need of heavenly wisdom.

Turning, however, from these scenes of riotous superstition to the quiet aspects of nature, when the rush and the tumult have subsided, the visitor may find this spot a fit scene from which to look both backward and forward. Backward—for what has God wrought in this vicinity! Not far hence, it may be here, the Hebrew host forded the river at the season when it was in periodic flood, and saw the arm of the Lord revealed as it had been at the Red Sea. "It was time for God to work," else his name would have faded from the memories of men. But God did work. By signs and wonders he proclaimed that there is a God—a just God and a holy, that judges in the earth. Or forward—the truth deposited with the Hebrews, by the words, "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord," was much obscured and often forgotten by them, but, in spite of their errors, it has been handed down in its purity. The nations are slowly but gradually adopting that truth; and the traveller learns to prize it more than ever, when, with the Jordan at hand, Jerusalem not very distant, and a thousand solemn memories floating all around, he marks the tokens of the true God's presence, of his long-suffering mercy for a time,

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DEAD SEA.



perhaps for many generations—but his retributive justice at last and for ever.

The next Excursion, starting from Er-Riha, or the banks of the Jordan near it, will further illustrate these conclusions.

EXCURSION V.

THE DEAD SEA.

OF all the sections of Palestine, except perhaps Jerusalem itself, the neighbourhood of the Dead Sea is the saddest and the dreariest. From various points, and especially from the summit of Olivet, its surface is partially visible ; but we must wander along its sullen margin, and there recall its peculiar history, before we can feel all that the Bahr Lât is fitted to teach.

It is a mysterious, melancholy sea—a huge caldron of bitumen and brimstone, which neither rain nor mountain streams, nor even the Jordan can sweeten. When Abraham and Lot looked towards it from the western heights, perhaps in the neighbourhood of Bethel, the region seemed as the garden of the Lord, but in a single generation the cup of its iniquity was full, and four or five cities were swept from their place,—Sodom, Gomorrah, Admah, and Zeboim, were overwhelmed in a catastrophe where fire and water, the skies above and the earth beneath, combined their energies to work out the pleasure of the righteous One. The waters of this sea are full 1300 feet below the level

of the ocean. This abyss, which runs from north to south, is about seventy miles in length, and twelve or more in breadth, bounded on each side by ramparts of rock—the mountains of Moab on the east, and the crags about Engedi and other places on the western shore. Where these leaden waters now heave or slumber, a scene of inviting beauty once spread out before the eye; but sin tarnished it, and, like our earth, it must be purified by fire. Strange events preceded the destruction. Wondrous prayers were offered. Wondrous visits from on high were paid, and unequivocal warnings were given. But men would not believe, or would not heed the warnings, and they perished. The region, lately so fair, is first scorched and then drowned, and there it lies, steeped for three or four thousand years in salt and sulphur, in bituminous abysses many fathoms deep, attesting the severity, as a thousand other places proclaim the goodness, of God. Deep down there are the remains of the multitudes whom no warning could reclaim. It is a grave to them, and a scene of death to much besides. Birds *do* fly over it, they even nestle on its desolate shores; but no fish lives there. Its indescribable bitterness destroys all vegetable life. Fishes floated down from the Jordan all perish in this sea, and the microscope can discover no trace even of animalculæ in it. It is literally the Dead Sea; and as it welters, or sleeps in sullen silence, the view upon its waters is melancholy beyond most spots on the earth.

The depression of this lake below the level of the Mediterranean has given rise to many speculations

among geologists and others. The Lake of Tiberias is more than 300 feet (some make it 600) below that level; and the Dead Sea, as we have seen, is more than 1300. Now, whence this wonder? Has some great breakdown taken place in past ages, so that what now forms the basin of the Dead Sea sank below its former level to the depth now mentioned? That is the opinion of some, and the fact that a channel runs down the centre of the sea much deeper than the rest of the "watery plain," gives some colour to that theory. That channel, it is supposed, formed the former bed of the river, which is lower than its banks, precisely as the existing Jordan bed is much lower than its banks at the present day. Were that supposition correct, then the Jordan must have flowed along the Arabah southward till it reached the sea, perhaps at the Elanitic Gulf. But there are difficulties in this theory not easily surmounted, though not, we think, proved to be insurmountable, and we must wait for more light or further discoveries on the subject. Meanwhile, the wonders of the scene are increased by the fact, that the Dead Sea has no outlet for its waters. Evaporation is its only means of discharge; and the heat of that huge caldron, begirt as it is with rocks, which help to render the whole a very focus for the evaporating influence, is reckoned enough to explain the phenomenon. Those who have been scorched along its arid margin or on its beach of salt, have been fain to plunge into its waters, so buoyant as to make swimming difficult, to escape from the oppression. True, as they dipt into the wave the taste of it was bitter like wormwood and

stringent like alum, while its effects upon the skin where it happened to be ruffled was like an application of caustic; but still, it is something to plunge into the waves, and float perhaps over the very spot where the pride of Sodom and Gomorrah lies entombed till the sea shall give up its dead.

Without cumbering this brief account with any minute details, let it be enough to give the impression of the whole:—"Life and soul are awanting. It never seems to smile. No city nor village is on its margin; no tree fringes its sands—only a few reeds and oleanders here and there; no skiff skims its surface; no fisher plies his trade; no Arab makes his dwelling here. All is desolation; and were it not for the brightness of an Eastern sun lighting up the wave, its dreariness would be altogether intolerable. . . . One feels that to live here perpetually within sight of all this gloom, and with all these memories floating round, would be oppressive beyond endurance. For bright as is the sunshine and blue as is the sea, there is so much of dreariness and hopeless sterility, that you are glad to turn from it all to the fresh stream and wooded banks of Jordan." Even the bare cliffs of the mountains of Moab are a relief from this sulphureous and briny dreariness; and as the waters of the Bahr have "no outlet but the ambient air," the pent-up feelings of the mind seek their outlet by rising upwards to the pure Source of all this justice, and all these solemn mementoes that, whether we believe it or not, there is a God that judgeth in the earth.

Even amid these sad and dreary scenes man makes

some spasmodic efforts to be happy, and some travellers have brought us interesting tidings of the music that may be heard at times on the shores of this sea. The roaming character and often the excited life of the brigand tribes adjacent, give rise to stirring adventures, threatening peril, which, however, is generally averted by presenting an aspect of calm boldness, such as turns most Orientals into cowards. Indeed, the peril not seldom becomes a topic for mirth when it is fairly confronted, and that mirth may end in music.

But the accounts of all travellers agree in representing the music of the Arabs as harsh and unpleasant. Heard far away among their own wild recesses, it may be appropriate to such scenes, and for their own purposes it may be exciting, like the cries of seamen when they work together; but it appears sometimes to be scarcely more musical. To cheer them by the way, or relieve them amid toil, the Arabs in some districts at once dance and sing, as Miriam and her attendants did. A traveller, for example, records, that on a night journey, one of the Arabs who conducted him advanced a short space before the rest of his party and began a song, dancing or rather shuffling forward with a peculiar motion to the air of his own words. The rest of the company joined in the chorus, and kept time by clapping the hands and taking part in the dance.

Now, while this responsive mode of singing illustrates many portions of Scripture (for instance, Ps. cxxxvi.), it conveys with great distinctness an idea of the popular Arabian music, which is powerful but not pleasing—the effect of strong vociferation on a certain key, rather

than of well modulated tones. Where the hand-mill is still in use, a kind of chant is common, at once to regulate and mitigate the toil; but no representation that we have seen describes it as sweet, or possessing any of the attractions associated by most of the Western nations with the very name of music or of song. For example, a missionary in the East was taken prisoner, and for some time kept under restraint by certain Bedawin near Palmyra. He had there an opportunity of hearing the music of the desert; for the sheikh, whose captive he was, produced a kind of guitar having only one string, upon which he played with a bow, as an accompaniment to his own rude singing. But the music of the Arabs, that missionary says, seems commonplace and monotonous to those who are accustomed to the soul-stirring strains of Western Europe. It is a slow and gloomy chant, not unlike some of the Irish wails deprived of their wild, peculiar sweetness.

Further: from the East travellers have brought us "The Nile Boat Song," a "Jewish Marriage Chant," "Mosque Music," "The Camel Chant of Arabs in the Desert," "Reed-pipe Music in the Desert," "Arab Marriage Music," and similar pieces; but their range is exceedingly limited,—indeed, they are monotony itself when placed side by side with the compositions of the West. One traveller says: "For three mortal hours, over, and over, and over, *Da Capo*, and over again," will Arabs in the desert chant a piece consisting of just fourteen notes. And another has given some grotesque specimens of the senseless tenor of such chants: "O my eyes! O my love! O the sun! O the moon! O my father!

O my mother! O my sister! O the river! O the pilgrimage to Mecca! O the procession of the sultan! O the prophet! O the effendi! O Abbas Pasha! O Mohammed! The hawagee [*i.e.*, travellers] are with us! We are going up the Nile!"—Such are the incoherencies of an Arab chant; and even though we concede that the sketch is a caricature rather than a picture, there is enough in the endless repetitions to indicate how poor the music must be. Yet at evening such songsters sometimes gather in groups, and with the accompaniment of a rude tambourine and a pipe made of reed, with the clapping of hands and other ecstatic rejoicings, they prolong their festival as if the pleasure which it yielded were intense. After all, they are not utterly in the predicament of the man who has no music in his soul.

Nor is the music of worship in the East either sweeter or richer than that of a less sacred kind. On the contrary, a competent judge has said that what he heard, even among the Jews, was the most outrageous concert of harsh, nasal sounds he had ever listened to. The same guttural, he adds, and the same amount of nasality are heard in the singing of every denomination in the East. The Orientals are deaf to harmony; they cannot comprehend it, and may be excited to rapture by what tortures the nerves of an Occidental.

In Jerusalem a traveller* was present at a concert where half a dozen performers used curious instruments, whose music was interspersed with wild bursts of song which elicited the cordial applause of the hearers.

* Dr. Thomson, *The Land and the Book*.

They had a violin, two or three kinds of flutes, and a tambourine, while one man, by himself apart, played upon a large harp, called a *kānūn*. Another instrument, the *kamanjeh*, slightly resembling a violin, and a guitar, or 'ood, are not uncommon; and the latter is often heard at festive meetings in the open air. The most popular, however, of all the musical instruments of Syria are the *derbekkeh*, a kind of drum; the *daff*, or tambourine; the *metkairat*, or kettle-drum; the cymbal, castanets, and the clapping of hands. On all festive occasions such instruments are introduced; and judging from the hours to which the festivities are prolonged, the delight must be intense.

Perhaps the most distinct accounts given of the popular music of the Arabs are those which are conveyed by the American Exploring Expedition. In sailing down the Jordan, and navigating the Dead Sea, the commander enjoyed many opportunities of listening to the music of the people; and he tells of its style in a manner that is the reverse of flattering. A bard on one occasion visited the tents, and sang Arabic songs, accompanying his vocal music with the *rēhabēh*, or viol of one string. The melody, we are told, was as rude as the instrument which produced it—a low, long-drawn, mournful wail, like the cry of a jackal set to music. The man sang of love, it is said; yet had it been a dirge—the wail of the living over the dead—it could not have been more lugubrious. But it produced a rapturous delight among the sons of the desert. On another occasion the musical regale was repeated; and of the nasal notes and twanging sounds of the per-

former, it is said that the discordant croaking of the frog was music in comparison : an occasional scream or yell would have been absolute relief.

Nor is the music better in those districts where it is commonly accompanied with dancing. One of the party commences a low, monotonous chant, and the rest repeat his words with as monotonous a cadence. The dance consists mainly of bowing and bending, and swinging the body from side to side, all the party following the movements of the chief performer, who carries a naked sword. These movements, with the peculiar gestures of some of the dancers, make the whole appear like some wild coronach disturbed by the gestures of a mountebank. This form of amusement sometimes gives place to the recitation of Arabic poetry, or the effusions of a rude improvisatore—an entertainment which is described as far more tolerable than the one-stringed *rêhabeh*, and less stupid than the dance already mentioned.

But there is an air sung by the tribes when about to meet either friends or foes, which differs much from all the rest of their music. It may be interpreted either as a song of welcome or a war-cry of defiance, and is described as the only really musical sound which is to be heard among the Arabs, though it consists of only ten notes. It is uttered in a high, shrill voice, and with a modulation or peculiarity bearing some affinity to portions of the Tyrolese music. The distance at which the war-cry can be heard is said to be almost incredible.

To enable the traveller in the East to understand the music which he will hear in the Holy Land, or on its

borders, the following piece, entitled "Arab Marriage Music from the Dead Sea," is submitted. Regarding it Mr. Macgregor says, in his "Eastern Music:"—"Sitting by the Dead Sea you may listen to Arab music; but you must forget the drawing-room, and imagine it a tent, and the Dead Sea in place of gardens or a verdant lawn; and the treble keys of Erard must sound as the voices of Bedouin maidens. It was in the stillness of night that I heard these Arab girls approach me, clapping their hands above their heads, and asking a present for the bride." The piece is as follows:—

ARAB MARRIAGE MUSIC, FROM THE DEAD SEA.

Allegretto.

A pecta o-ma nee A pecta

tootasee Far-in-es-er o-kin-or

Ayah tinta too-ta roo - a A peeta

o - manee kumnee too - ta - roo - a

D.C.

D.C.

Upon the whole, it would seem that the music of the East has degenerated as far from what it was in ancient times as the country is deteriorated in other respects. All are aware of the skill of David as a harper, and of the effects which his harp music produced on the dark soul of Saul. Then the singers whom the musical king selected for public worship, and the pains which he took to have them regularly trained, all betoken great progress in the musical art. Moreover, the musical instruments mentioned in Scripture are in some cases so complex or intricate as to imply no limited skill and power of execution. There was the harp which Jubal invented (Gen. iv. 21), and David perhaps improved

(Amos vi. 5). It was peculiarly an instrument of joy (1 Chron. xvi. 5; Isa. xxiii. 16), and was employed to augment the jubilee of vintage (Isa. xxiv. 8); while on the other hand, in token of their deep sorrow, the Jews at Babylon hung their harps on the willows and wept (Ps. cxxxvii. 2). In some cases the harp had ten strings, though the number varied; and altogether it appears to have been rather a national instrument, whether it was a harp proper, or only some instrument of a similar structure.

There was also the psaltery, a stringed instrument often mentioned by David, and chiefly used in public worship (1 Chron. xxv. 1-7). Another, and a different instrument is mentioned in Ps. viii., lxxxi., lxxxiv., and elsewhere. Daniel speaks of the sackbut, while in other places instruments are named supposed to have been lutes or guitars. It should be remarked, however, that very discordant opinions are entertained regarding these, and other instruments, by learned men; and such are the doubts which such discussions have raised, that it will be difficult now ever to reach very definite convictions on the subject.

Wind instruments were also well known among the Hebrews of old; for example, the horn (Dan. iii. 5, 7, 10, 15), the jubilee trumpet, and another referred to in Exod. xix. 13, and elsewhere. Compare Matt. vi. 2. Pipes of various kinds were also employed. Flutes are spoken of, and all these meet in the organ ascribed, like the harp, to Jubal (Gen. iv. 21); though that organ is understood to have been very different from the complex instrument known in our day by the same name.

And, not to protract our references, the Jews had various musical instruments of percussion. The tambourine which Miriam used (Exod. xv. 20), belongs to this class, as do also the cymbals repeatedly mentioned in Scripture.

Now, all these instruments, and others which might be named, make it sufficiently obvious that the Jews must have been proficient in music to a considerable extent. Their Psalms of Degrees, whatever be the explanation of the name, their hymns chanted on the way to the great festivals of the nation, with various references or denunciations by the prophets, all indicate how much the art or even the science was cultivated. The voluptuary summoned the daughters of music to his help. The heart-stricken did the same. The devout deepened their devotions by psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs. In short, there is much to betoken a progress in musical knowledge and skill far in advance of anything that is now common in the East.

And whence the present decadence? With the Dead Sea before us—once fertile and a well-peopled plain, but now a colossal caldron filled with water as bitter as wormwood, and as offensive, but far more useless—that question admits of only one answer. The land is for some reason blighted. The daughters of music have ceased, according to the threat. The hill sides, once terraced and luxuriant, now bleak, scarred, and blasted, proclaim the same sad truth; and though the Arab music, which is sometimes heard on the shores of the Bahr Lât, gives a kind of life to the scene, that is but a flash amid dense gloom. The whole vicinity is laden

with some heavy blight. So true is all this, that the Mohammedan Muezzin—"God is great, God is the greatest; come to prayer, come to prayer; prayer is better than work, come to prayer"—is really the chief music that the traveller will ordinarily hear. The land is trodden down by the Gentiles, and hence it is widowed and without music. It is now, from Dan to Beer-sheba, and from the Jordan to the Great Sea, as when the Hebrew captives hung their harps on the willows of Babylon.

And the wonder is deepened by the fact, that some of the Hebrew nation still take their place among the great composers of their times. But in their own land they are tuneless, as if its peeled and pillaged state made music impossible; and the traveller will listen in vain for any of the sacred chants of Salem, accustomed as he is to trace the noblest of all odes ever set to music to the Land of Promise as their original. This sadly tells us how complete is the desolation that has overtaken the land called the Holy; it sometimes appears as if the traces of decay were too deep to admit of any emotions of joy amid such scenes. Who can look upon that sullen sea without sadness? Who can recall what it entombs without standing in awe at the Holy One's rebuke? Yet that is only a solitary monument of retribution. The land altogether is the same: "There they carried us away captive, and required of us a song; and they that wasted us required of us mirth, saying, Sing us one of the songs of Zion."

The shores of the Dead Sea have been described as rugged, rocky, precipitous, and at many points admit-

ting of no access to the waters. At the southern extremity strange formations in salt, amounting almost to a salt mountain, and called by that name, arrest the traveller's attention ; and there all is, of course, a consummate sterility. There are spots, however, where the ardent suns of Palestine produce an Oriental vegetation. That takes place wherever there is fresh water ; and to show that even the shores of the Dead Sea are not absolute desolation, we may glance at these green recesses before leaving the region.

On the western shore, then, is Ain Jidy, the Engedi of Scripture. It is found in a wild ravine, where caves abound, which have been used as sepulchres for the dead, and as lurking-places, or even homes, for the living. The place, owing to its form, is warmer than even the vicinity of the sea ; and, in consequence of copious springs, the vegetation is rich. It was a favourite even in the days of Solomon, for he finds in Engedi a figure to set forth the charms of her whom he eulogizes (Cant. i. 14). Here, also, some of the adventures of David, while at strife with Saul, befell ; and whether the poetical allusions of Scripture to this region were borrowed from the camphire, or from a peculiar kind of grape which grows in such dells, the luxuriance of the place is equally settled.

The cliffs of Engedi, which means "Fountain of the Goats," are still the resort of that animal, unchanged in its haunts and habits, like all Eastern things. The gazelle, and some less poetic representatives of the species, are still found there ; and between the caves, the fresh vegetation, the copious streams, and these ani-

mals still disporting at the place, the traveller of our day can, without much difficulty, go back in thought to David or to Solomon,—can luxuriate as of old in this rich dell, and discover that, while so much around him is bleak, sterile, and utterly blighted, there are specimens there to tell what the land once was, and what it may yet be again.

Nor is this the only ravine with streams which here find their way to the bitter sea. With some exaggeration, yet picturesquely, Lieutenant Lynch thus describes what he calls “the very Egeria of fountains:”—“Far in among the cane, embowered, embedded, hidden deep in the shadow of purple rocks and luxuriant vegetation, lapsing with a gentle murmur from basin to basin, over the rocks, under the rocks, by the rocks, and clasping the rocks with its crystal arms, was this little fountain-wonder. The thorny nubk and the pliant osher were on the bank above; yet lower the oleander and the tamarisk; while upon its brink the lofty cane, bent by the weight of its fringe-like tassels, formed bowers over the stream fit for the haunt of Naiads. Diana herself could not have desired a more secluded bath than each of us took in a secluded basin.” Lieutenant Lynch is disposed to claim for this spot the honour of being Sir Walter Scott’s “Diamond of the Desert,” though others allege that that is at Engedi.

But the beautiful in this land of contrasts not seldom lies in the lap or the vicinity of the terrific; and not very far to the south of Engedi is found Masada, a stronghold which acquired a dismal celebrity during the Jewish wars. Waving the exaggerations of some

regarding the place, there are on the rock, which is from 1200 to 1500 feet above the sea, some remains of Roman defences, of palaces and strongholds, all testifying the importance of the castle which once crowned the height. Here Herod built for himself one palace more, providing a place of safety, in case of need, on the summit of the stern and solemn crag, which could be approached only from one side by a winding ascent called "The Serpent," where ten men above might chase a thousand below. But all that is interesting about Masada fades away in comparison with the tragedy which was enacted there during the last struggles of Palestine against Rome. Some men of doubtful character seized upon the place, determined to defend it to the last. Silva, the Roman assailant, surrounded it with a wall, to reduce the band by famine; but they died rather than yield. They were nine hundred and sixty in all; and Eleazar, their chief, was the fit leader of such a band. When all hope was past, the husbands slew their wives and children, and heaped them up together in one ghastly pile. They next chose ten by lot to slaughter the men,—it was done. Then one was chosen from the ten to slay the nine,—that also was done. And, lastly, the tenth fell by his own hand. Some accounts tell of two women and five children who survived to tell the tale; but, even with that deduction, the horrid doings on that conical crag seem in some respects a match for the terrors connected with Sodom and Gomorrah. "His blood be on us and on our children," was once the imprecation of the Jews. Was the wish fulfilled or not on that rock, whose

very colour, as well as its history, is suggestive of blood?

Such are some glimpses of the Dead Sea,—its shores, its wonders, its horrors, and yet its beauties. It is sad to be near it long; but its marvellous correspondence with the Scriptural account has convinced at least one doubter that the word of God is what it claims to be.

EXCURSION VI.

NEBI SAMWIL—(MIZPAH?)

IN describing the view from the Mount of Olives, a reference was made to Nebi Samwil, the highest eminence to the west of Jerusalem, or between it and the Mediterranean. But that place and the whole region demand or deserve a separate visit.

Leaving Jerusalem, then, by the Damascus Gate, the visitor soon enters Wady Beit Hanina. The Tombs of the Kings and the Judges, so called, are passed at a short distance from the city, and after a walk of about two hours, implying a space of five or six miles, the summit of the hill is gained. The route is sometimes bleak and sterile; but the terraced slopes, with groves of the olive, and other trees, give, at some points, both beauty and fertility to the scene. They at least explain, in one respect, why this country is often so dreary now compared with former times. Bestow on it the same amount of culture, and its soil and its sky

would produce a similar abundance. But it is the view from Nebi Samwil and the history of the place that form the great attractions here. The crest of the hill, which is 2649 feet high, Jerusalem being 2200 feet, and Olivet 2398, is crowned with a mosque, which displaced a Christian church, and the Mohammedans venerate the prophet Samuel there, guided by the tradition that this is the Ramah where that prophet was born. More recent investigations, however, rather indicate to some that this is Mizpah, not Ramah ; and though doubts still remain upon the subject, the most accurate critics on the Holy Land are persuaded that Mizpah was situated here (1 Sam. vii.) The name means *watch-tower*, and no place near Jerusalem seems so suitable for that purpose ; but, on the other hand, Ramah means *high, exalted*, and that name also corresponds with the nature of the locality.* But be these things as they may, the eye of the visitor here sweeps from Jaffa on the sea-board over the districts of Benjamin and Judah to Jerusalem and Mount Olivet, here blended into one, and stretches eastward to the mountains of Moab and Ammon. No enemy could move in force for any considerable distance in all that range, without being detected from this watch-tower. The wayfarer is thus enabled to form a correct notion of the region, and understand, from the nature of the country, why the prophet Samuel, as Judge in Israel, went "in circuit to Bethel, and Gilgal, and Mizpeh."

* Dr. Stanley regards Nebi Samwil as the high place of Gibeon, and not as Mizpah. The latter he is disposed to identify with Scopus, wherever that was.—*Sinai and Palestine*, p. 226.

As far as they are known, or conjectured, the sites of these places are found in this district (1 Sam. vii. 16).

It was on the summit of Nebi Samwil that travelers of old first obtained a glimpse of Jerusalem. It was, therefore, called "Mount Joy" in former times; and some suppose that from the same height Richard Cœur de Lion, when advancing from Ajalon, caught a glance of the city, though he would not look on its towers, but exclaimed, "Ah, Lord God, I pray that I may never see thy Holy City, if I may not rescue it from the hands of thine enemies." Indeed, in all ages this elevated spot has been prominent among historical events; and though it is now, like many other places, a scene for wordy contention, as before it was a place for actual strife and bloodshed, no one can look upon "the high place," or think of the idolatries which it witnessed, as well as of its sacredness when the Ark sojourned there, as it did for many years, without feeling that his visit to these mountains has not been in vain. He has penetrated here into the very heart of the country, and beheld the memorable scenes where Joshua established his power in Canaan, and, in fact, won it for its God.

At some distance northward from the spot now described we find the modern village of El-Bireh, "The Well." It is the ancient Beeroth, and is remarkable as the first resting-place of the caravans proceeding northward to Sychar and elsewhere from Jerusalem. A monkish tradition tells that this is the place where the mother of Jesus missed him as she was returning from the Passover, when she hastened back to the city to seek him. Considering how persistent are habits of all

kinds in the East, this legend is probably true; and here, therefore, we may indulge the hope that we are near the spot where an interesting incident in the Saviour's young life befell.

But these are not the only attractive places to be found on this excursion. At a short distance to the south of Nebi Samwil is El-Jib, or Gibeon, separated from Ramah by a deep valley. El-Jib stands on a rocky eminence insulated from the surrounding hills by other valleys, yet overtopped by these elevations in a way of natural defence. It must have been a strong and extensive place of old, for mines, quarries, tombs, and other remains of former times, still attest the importance of the hold. Though now trodden down by the ill-conditioned peasantry who nestle there, El-Jib, as Gibeon, is prominent in the Old Testament. It was from it that the deceivers came to impose upon Joshua at Gilgal, soon after he entered the land, and strike a league with him, ignoble as regarded themselves, yet such as secured their exemption from utter destruction. Their worn-out shoes—their wine skins parched and rent, as if their journey had been a long one—their garments torn and beggarly—their bread old, and more than stale—all helped on the deception. Jericho and Ai had already fallen before the conqueror; and though the surrounding princes had combined to resist him, the Gibeonites thought deceit their best defence. So far they succeeded (Joshua ix.) Their city was strong, and though they had overreached the Hebrews, their confederacy helped forward the subjugation of the land. It was just before the great battle of Ajalon, which de-

cided the fate of that portion of Palestine. Their successful fraud, indeed, led to other evil results, but even these were overruled by Him who makes the wrath of man to praise him. Pausing upon one of these heights to ponder on the past, a devout mind may feel as if it were face to face with the Supreme, whose power has been so signally displayed among these mountains and valleys.

And the past is closely connected with the present by what is sometimes witnessed there. It was one portion of the sentence on the Gibeonites for their treachery that they should be hewers of wood and drawers of water. Now, there is a famous fountain under a perpendicular rock to the south-east of the modern village; then, at no great distance there is a pond or little lake; and these things may have suggested the drawing of water,—especially when we remember that crowds must have resorted to Gibeon to worship when the Tabernacle was stationed there. But in regard to the hewing of wood, that drudgery continues to this day. It is described as the severest kind of toil, and chiefly carried on by the women and children, who convey firewood from the hills of Gibeon to Jerusalem. Between these burdens and the drawing of water from deep wadies with steep banks, the lot of the Gibeonites is depicted as worse than slavery, and as exemplifying some of the most pathetic lamentations of Jeremiah. He says (Lam. v. 13),—"The children fell under the wood;" and the woe has descended from the Jew to the Moslem: it is mentioned as a characteristic of the region.*

* Dr. Thomson, in *The Land and the Book*, has made an ingenious use of the lake or pool mentioned as existing near Gibeon. In Josh. xviii.

Beth-horon and Kirjath-jearim are both connected with Gibeon. In proceeding to the first, now called Beit-Ur, many ruins are found, and much to indicate that not merely in the days of Joshua, but in the wars which have often devastated the region since that time, these rocky passes were strongholds of importance. Yet all has not been war and bloodshed here. When the Tabernacle was kept in this region, till the ruler of Israel had found a place for the sacred symbol to rest in, royalty often frequented this vicinity. It was in some degree its home; and Wady-Suleyman, near Gibeon, is connected with the name of one who was the wisest, but became one of the most foolish, of the sons of men.*

But it would not be easy, amid these plains and hill sides, so scorched and bare at some seasons of the year, to reproduce the gorgeous scenes which might have been witnessed when the Ark sojourned at Gibeon, or illustrated that vicinity. It was there, moreover, that Solomon sacrificed on a scale which we can scarcely comprehend: "Solomon loved the Lord, walking in the statutes of David his father: only he sacrificed and burnt incense in high places. And the king went to Gibeon to sacrifice there; for that was the great high place: a thousand burnt-offerings did Solomon offer upon that altar" (1 Kings iii. 3, 4). In Gibeon also, in a

14, one of the borders of Benjamin is described as reaching to the sea. A glance at a map will show how difficult or impossible that would be in regard to Gibeon and its vicinity. But the Hebrews called a *lake* a sea. Now, suppose this to be the lake or sea, and the difficulty vanishes.

* Some suppose that it was at Gibeon that the Gibeonites hung up the seven sons of Saul, in revenge for the slaughter of their kindred.

dream by night, the Lord had appeared to Solomon, and bestowed upon him more than he had asked or thought; so that, while visiting these mountains, we are evermore brought face to face with the wondrous loving-kindness of God in contrast with the waywardness of man. The Father of lights gave wisdom: man turned it into foolishness. Jehovah appeared in his glory: man turned from him to adore the—

“Horrid king, besmeared with blood
Of human sacrifice, and parents’ tears.”

While gazing upon a panorama so crowded with historical associations as that which greets the eye from many a spot in this vicinity, event after event comes uncalled but welcome into the visitor’s mind. For example, Anata, the ancient Anathoth, the birth-place of Jeremiah (i. 1), lies in this region; and as this site for once seems to be indisputably ascertained, we can here rejoice in a certainty not always within our reach. The modern village is poor, and half in ruins. The hour’s journey which brings the wayfarer to the capital, also leads him through the tract of country which the assailants of Jerusalem often traversed in advancing against it. In describing the approach of Sennacherib’s army, as it marched to its grave in the neighbourhood of the city, Isaiah furnishes a catalogue of the places in that vicinity. His vivid word-picture may well be studied amid these scenes: it is by no means a bad topography; nay, it is thoroughly good in as far as the sites have been ascertained. Spot after spot yields to the invader; family after family flee or succumb; gradually the city where all the hopes of Sennacherib were

centred is approached by the invaders. But hear Isaiah's own pictorial words:—"He is come to Aiath, he is passed to Migron; at Michmash he hath laid up his carriages:* they are gone over the passage: they have taken up their lodging at Geba; Ramah is afraid; Gibeah† of Saul is fled. Lift up thy voice, O daughter of Gallim; cause it to be heard unto Laish, O poor Anathoth. Madmenah is removed; the inhabitants of Gebim gather themselves to flee. As yet shall he remain at Nob‡ that day: he shall shake his hand against the mount of the daughter of Zion, the hill of Jerusalem." Such was the Assyrian's advance. We know that He who was for walls and bulwarks round his Zion made the retreat a far less proud display; but on that account we can just the more easily realize the power of a present God.

Such scenes, then, far more than repay a visit to the Holy Land, where that power may be felt on every hill top, or in every valley. Some of the places, for instance, Aiath or Ai, may not yet be completely identified (though, in our opinion, Ai is), but the outline of the country is now so well defined in regard to the leading places, that the reading of the Bible there becomes somewhat like the study of a map. Indeed, no portion of the land is more absolutely a portion of history than that which Nebi Samwil overlooks. Some parts of it are rocky, and scarred as if a volcano had scathed it. Deep ravines and waterless wadies abound in the district,

* For the country was too hilly to admit of their use.

† Now Jib'a.

‡ A place situated near the north end of the Mount of Olives.

and much remains to be still disinterred, for only conjecture has at some points hitherto been at work. But far and near, the history of Old Testament times is re-enacted here. There are the mountains of Judah. Yonder is Pisgah, or Mount Nebo. In *that* direction is Bethany, in *that* lies Bethlehem; and all these may well fasten truth upon the mind like a nail in a sure place. That truth becomes embalmed in the memory; and though mere history be not saving truth, yet God has made history the vehicle for conveying that truth to man, and blessed is the heart which welcomes it as from God. True, to see a Moslem mosque now crowning Mizpah, and there supplanting a Christian church, appears like a dark cloud hanging over the scene. But it is a cloud fringed with light. The darkness will yet be dispelled, when glory once more makes the Land of the Book its home.

Upon the whole, our wanderings around Jerusalem bring out this fact distinctly—these rugged scenes could never have been an agricultural country, in the Western sense of the words. Olive-yards may have abounded, and at some places they do so still. The vine, the fig, and other fruit-trees, may have been no less frequent; and competent judges pronounce a country under culture for such productions to be far more picturesque than tame corn-lands.* It is even said, and we believe it, that the country around Jerusalem, when it was clothed with orchards of fruit-trees, with vineyards, or olive fields, “must have shown one of the most agree-

* Dr. Thomson—*The Land and the Book*.

able panoramas the eye of man ever beheld." All that is needed is good government, right principle among the governed, the ancient industry restored, and the delightful land would be a delightful land once more. Land on which olives grow is worth more, acre for acre, than any kind of grain.* Hence the ancient richness of Palestine, and hence the hope evermore recurring, that its fertility may yet be restored.

BETHEL.

Without returning to Jerusalem, this Excursion might be prolonged by a visit to Bethel and its stony vicinity, one of the earliest scenes of interest known even in Palestine. The modern name of the place is Beitin; but men are generally agreed that it is identified. There were the oak and the grave of Deborah. The forest of Bethel is mentioned once and again in Scripture; but it is first made illustrious as the place where Abraham pitched his tent. Lying between the central parts of Judah and the valley of the Jordan, it was in the line of one of the great thoroughfares of the land; so that, both in going to Egypt and returning from it, the patriarch set up an altar to his God at Bethel. The mountain east of it, having Bethel on the west and Ai on the east, was a noted scene in Abraham's history, for there he and Lot most probably separated, the one to the neighbourhood of Sodom, the other to the west. There also Jacob rested with a stone for his pillow, and dreamed

* Dr. Thomson—*The Land and the Book*.

the dream more interesting far than any mortal reality. The bare rocks, without any shelter for the wayfarer, seem to indicate that the neighbourhood is now what it was in the days of Jacob, the wrestler—"The house of God," although rough and trying to his servant.

After the time of Jacob's visit, when he set up the stone pillow for a pillar of remembrance, a sanctuary arose at Bethel. Then the Judges gathered the people together there for public assemblies (Judges xx. 18, 26). Luz, a city of the Canaanites, stood upon the spot, till they were superseded by others. War gathered round the place, and both as a frontier town and a sanctuary, Bethel became sacred to the Jews. At length Jeroboam built a temple there; and, according to some, remains of that temple may perhaps exist in the eminences above the modern Beitin. In the days of Hosea, or before them, the place had become the scene of idolatrous abominations, where a rival temple and rival gods—"the calves"—vied with Jehovah and his worship;—man's defiling inventions, or what Jeroboam had "devised out of his own heart," supplanted the revelation and the laws of the Eternal. The prophecies of Hosea (iv., v., vi.) should be read upon the spot, to indicate at once the deep degradation of the idolaters, and the yearnings of mercy over them after all. Its subsequent history should also be traced, for gross abominations were there, which had to be swept from the face of the earth; and when the cup of its iniquity was full, Bethel became heaps, like other places in the guilty land. Its very site was long unknown, or, at least, utterly unheeded; and it has been one of the

last to be identified by the industry and penetration of modern research.

Perhaps there is no spot in all the land of Israel where we can more vividly learn the deep meaning of the prophetic writings than here. Some of these writings seem dark and obscure. They refer to doings which we do not understand, or to scenes with which we are not acquainted; and are, therefore, often read without interest. But at Beitin every word becomes significant—a commentary is before our eyes. The revolt involved in idolatry—the crushing of that by Omnipotence—its re-appearance in new forms, and spreading like a leprosy till it had affected the whole heart, and soul, and strength, and mind, and so ended in ruin,—these are some of the truths forced upon us amid such scenes, and the wisest heart will most profoundly ponder such results. Does not the Power which has levelled idolatrous Bethel with the dust stand pledged to do the same to idolatry in every form?

EXCURSION VII.

RAMLEH.

THIS place is situated on the road to Jaffa, and is about twenty-seven miles from Jerusalem, and ten from the sea. The road thither is difficult and not always interesting, but leaving the capital by the gate already so often mentioned, that which leads to Bethle-

hem in one direction, and Jaffa in another, the visitor proceeds along the route which myriads of pilgrims have trod, and where perhaps more mingled emotions have been felt than in the same space in any country in the world. The region is studded with ruins and crowded with Scriptural associations; indeed, the visitor will here traverse scenes, not a few of which are of deepest interest in the history of the land.

Emerging from the city, then, he skirts the upper valley of Gihon, and at the distance of less than two miles reaches the spot where Jerusalem first becomes visible to the traveller from the sea coast. There multitudes have paused to weep, to pray, to indulge in maudlin sentiment, or thank God for the sight, according to the state of the pilgrim's mind. But by this route not merely have pilgrims approached the city. Her proud conquerors have assailed her along this line of march. Egypt, Babylon, Greece, and Rome, have all come up against her; and with the mind in that state of half-excitement which is not uncommon in the land of the Messiah, it is not difficult to people these paths as of old with the mailed legions of Rome, or the resistless veterans of Alexander's wars. Such spots as greet the visitor along this route transform the whole region into a vast remembrancer, and at every step new events are suggested by new sights and scenes. The festivals of Judaism, the achievements of its warriors, the footsteps of its Messiah, all help to make our present journey one of unwonted interest.

At some distance from the city, the country, which is often bleak, and scorched, and barren near the capital,

assumes a gay and green appearance. Near the village of Kulonieh* orchards are found where the olive and the vine mingle with the pomegranate and other fruits. Deep dells, picturesque ruins, somewhat lofty hills,—in short, a greater variety of rural beauty than is common in the region, gladdens the wayfarer. The alleged, though not very probable site of the village of Emmaus, referred to by Luke (xxiv.), gives further interest to the journey at this point, while deep ravines and wooded slopes help to foster the high expectations of richness and beauty which nearly all entertain when they wander over the Land of the Book.

Still further along the route the village of Kuriet-el-Enab is visited. It stands in a district varied by pasture lands and green valleys, by stately trees, and other traces of past or present well-being. But the chief interest of the place, now lorded over by a modern freebooter whom even the Sultan can scarcely tame, is the supposition that Kuriet-el-Enab is the modern representative of Kirjath-jearim, or "the city of forests." Thither the Ark was carried from Beth-shemesh, and there it remained till David removed it in state to the capital of the land. The king, we know, was anxious that the symbol of the presence of his God should have a permanent resting-place, and "to bring up the ark of God the Lord" he went up and all Israel to Kirjath-jearim. It is a wild scene, taken as a whole, and the jubilee feeling which accompanied the transference can

* This is the Arabic form of Colonia. The Romans had a colony in this neighbourhood, and the remaining arch of a ruined Roman bridge in one of the wadies tells of their presence.

without much difficulty be reproduced by the reflective traveller, when "David and all Israel played before God with all their might, and with singing, and with harps, and with psalteries, and with timbrels, and with cymbals, and with trumpets." The daughters of music have now disappeared from that land, and the art, as we have seen, is little cultivated ; for the most part it is harsh discord, not sweet sounds. But on the occasion which is here referred to, no fewer than five musical instruments are named. In this respect, as in others, the glory has departed.

From Kuriet-el-Enab, "the city of grapes," the road descends in a manner that is somewhat perilous to wayfarers—at some points the pass is narrow and precipitous, and renders travelling rather more an adventure than a pastime. Beyond it the country is rocky, and abounds in wooded ravines, though different travellers describe it according to their different views and impressions. The olive grows on the slopes. Flowers of varied hues give their beauty, at some seasons, to the route, and, as a resting-place half way between Jerusalem and Ramleh is found in this vicinity, the country is sometimes an *al fresco* hotel for the many-hued, many-tongued dwellers in the East, as well as for pilgrims from the West. It should be added, that roads formed in the rocky beds of mountain streams, in such a district as this, do not add to the comfort of the wayfarer. "We are in Palestine" must form his solace amid all such troubles.

Another movement nearer to Ramleh brings the traveller to a fabulous but not uninteresting spot. It

is El-Latron, the birth-place, according to tradition, of the penitent thief who was crucified along with the Redeemer. It was perhaps a fortress in ancient times, commanding this approach to the city. In this neighbourhood, we are told, Solomon built Beth-horon the upper, and Beth-horon the nether, fenced cities with walls (1 Kings ix. 17), and similar purposes might suggest the building now called El-Latron. But be that as it may, tradition has seized upon the ruined fort, and it is now sacred to the memory of the penitent thief in the eyes of all traditionists.

From this point to Ramleh, by El-kubab, a distance of perhaps ten miles, the path leads through a country where occasional glimpses of much beauty are seen—woody slopes, deep ravines, and a considerable extent of tith. But there is little to detain us till we reach Ramleh, which lies on the eastern slope of a broad, undulating eminence in the wide plain which stretches hence away to the Mediterranean and Jaffa. The place is surrounded by gardens of delicious fruits, and by rich olive groves. Occasional palm-trees are also seen, and some of the houses are substantially built of stone. The inhabitants are about 3000 in number, of whom about one-third are professedly Christian, as one of the largest convents in Palestine is found at Ramleh.

But the chief object of attention here is a tower of doubtful origin, though of extensive use to the visitor. Some reckon it the remains of an ancient khan; others assign to it the rank of a minaret, the latter perhaps the true explanation. It is of solid mason-work, and

about 120 feet high, affording from the summit one of the noblest views in the region. To the west is the Great Sea, and the plain of Sharon between; to the east are the mountains; while all around is crowded with a beauty which forms a pleasing vestibule to the wonders of the land. The prospect has been compared to the valley of the Rhine, as seen from the castle of Heidelberg; or to the plains of Lombardy from the Duomo of Milan,—and though these comparisons may be somewhat extreme, no traveller should visit Ramleh without enjoying this view of Palestine, at once rich, varied, and surpassingly beautiful.

Ramleh means *sand*, or *sandy*, and the surrounding soil explains the name. Some claim for it the honour of being the Ramathaim-zophim of Scripture, and others regard it as the Arimathea of Joseph, who furnished a tomb for the crucified One. These claims, however, are controverted, and more light is needed ere a decision can be formed. As far back as the ninth century it bore its present name. The Greeks, the Latins, and the Armenians have each a convent here, but the Saracenic style of the minaret, and other things, indicate what power is paramount. Ramleh at one period had a castle and walls, and, during the crusades, it was deemed a place of much importance, so that it passed through all the vicissitudes of fortune incident to those dark but earnest times. When Richard of England approached it in the year 1191, his great rival, Saladin, caused the fortress, along with others, to be razed. Some allege, further, that the Templars had a convent and a church at Ramleh, but here again we are involved

in antiquarian labyrinths, and, instead of becoming entangled in these, it seems better to admire the outspread beauty which environs the place. Sharon, though shorn of its roses now, is still a fair region towards the north, and Philistia, though stripped of its formidable warriors, still stretches invitingly towards the sea-board on the south. Though there be nothing to show that the Saviour ever visited this place, yet if we might connect the name of Joseph with it, that would bring us into close proximity to Him whose name is above every name. It would link us once more to Him who gives its supreme charm to the land, apart from whom it might still seem fair, but could in no sense be holy.*

That we have not overrated the beauty of Ramleh and its vicinity, is plain from many a traveller's journal. One, for example, says that the country, as its author saw it, was green with grass and dappled with flowers. The bean-fields perfumed the whole air with their fragrance, the olive-groves resounded with the song of birds, the lark, with unwearying wing, soared high overhead, and the stork proudly stepped along its way. True, these attractions were dashed by the unseemliness of some portions of the place, and its dissonance with western ideas. Yet, in more respects than its architecture, Ramleh appears to combine the Oriental and the Occidental, displaying some of the peculiar beauties of each.

* It is more probable that we must seek Arimathea at a village a short distance from Ludd, about to be mentioned. Indeed, there we have, according to some, the native place of the man "who went in boldly unto Pilate, and craved the body of Jesus."

But the account now given is tame compared with the most recent, perhaps, of all. "The view from the top of the tower," it says, "is inexpressibly grand. The whole plain of Sharon, from the mountains of Judea and Samaria to the sea, and from the foot of Carmel to the sandy deserts of Philistia, lies spread out like an illuminated map. Beautiful as vast, and diversified as beautiful, the eye is fascinated, the imagination enchanted, especially when the last rays of the setting sun light up the white villages which sit or hang among the many-shaped declivities of the mountains. At such an hour I saw it once and again, and often lingered until the stars looked out from the deep sky, and the breezes of evening shed soft dews on the feverish land. What a paradise was here, when Solomon reigned in Jerusalem, and sang of the 'rose of Sharon!' Better still will it be when He who is greater than Solomon shall sit on the throne of David his father, for in his days shall the righteous flourish, and abundance of peace, so long as the moon endureth. The mountains shall bring peace to the people, and the little hills by righteousness."* Such is the manner in which everything here leads up the mind to the Anointed. In truth, the Holy Land is a test of the state of our hearts. Can we wander amid its scenes, and admire its beauty, or weep for its degradation, without thought of Him whose right it is to rule here? Then is the heart right with God? On the other hand, is the Anointed always the centre to which we turn?—

* *The Land and the Book*, vol. II. pp. 299, 300.

is He the terminus at which we rest? Then we are like-minded with Paul and Peter and all the inspired band. Jerusalem on high is our real home.

From the Minaret of Ramleh, if it be a minaret, the eye of the traveller has roamed over a very goodly landscape. But it may be better still if he can make that town his centre for a time, and thence visit some of the scriptural places around it. Among these the first may be Ludd, the ancient Lydda. It stands about three miles north-east from Ramleh, and is surrounded by olive-groves. Its gardens and orchards, like those of Ramleh, rank among the richest in Palestine—they furnish hints, at least, as to what the country once was. Ludd is reputed the birth-place of St. George, the legendary patron of England. He was born here, men say, in the third century, and perished in Nicomedia during the persecutions under Diocletian. He was interred here, and his church or his tomb became the centre of many a desperate struggle during crusading times. But Ludd needs not the poor celebrity which these equivocal records bestow, for it has nobler associations than such sources can supply (1 Chron. viii. 12; Acts ix. 32-38). There Peter preached the gospel to "the saints which dwelt at Lydda;" there, also, he said to Eneas, who "had kept his bed eight years," "Jesus Christ maketh thee whole." Thence he was summoned to Joppa on the death of Dorcas; and with such memories floating around it, we need not, when at Lydda, seek the adventitious aid either of papal saints or fierce crusaders. Among the olive-groves and fruit-gardens of the place, with the New Testament for

his guide, and its glad tidings for his joy, a devout man will listen to the still small voice which tells of the City of our God in the better country on high.

In the neighbourhood of Ludd, and quite near to St. George's Church, the visitor may find a pleasant, shady burying-ground. It is Mohammedan, and one is curious to know how "God's acre" is used by the followers of Islam. In rural places, at least, their mode of interment is plain even to rudeness. A simplicity is affected in their worship which is in striking contrast with the gaud and the gorgeousness of the Greek or Papal pomp; and it is the same in regard to sepulture. If attractive at all, the dwelling of the dead is not made attractive by decoration.

First in a funeral procession comes a group of boys, some of them, perhaps, attracted by what is rare in a country town or village. They are bare-footed, bare-headed, and ragged, and chant a kind of wail or dirge in harmony with the occasion.

These are followed by men walking two and two abreast, and echoing the monotonous lament of the boys. They are clothed in long frocks and trousers, turbaned, and sometimes seem grave or even venerable. If the place be populous, there may be some blind men in the procession, led by their friends, and augmenting by their presence the sadness of the scene. The bier follows next, which is carried by four men. The body is wrapt in a white cloth, and the turban of the dead man is placed above his body, as a soldier's trappings are laid on his coffin among us.

Besides the mourners now mentioned, there are

females in the procession veiled in white, with only openings for their eyes. From time to time they utter a piercing shriek, and at that sound of nature's outcry (assuming it to be genuine, and not professional), the stranger from a far country feels linked to the swarthy mourners by the tie of a common humanity, so as to be unable to refrain from joining his sorrow to theirs. Sometimes the wail swells out into a kind of howl, and then, mingling with the lament of the men, it occasions a certain degree of awe to the onlooker.

In some places of the East no coffin is used by the Mohammedans. The body is merely wrapt in cloth, and then deposited in the grave, where it is sometimes covered with a low stone arch.—Strange sights these to which to turn a traveller's attention, but they are as salutary as they are strange, since we are dying daily.

Such is the mode of interment among the people who follow Islam. Ludd contains about 2000 active and thriving inhabitants, and nestles amid olive, fig, pomegranate, mulberry, sycamore, and other trees. Though the town is dilapidated, and contains the sad remains of former greatness, at least beyond its present state, it is made pleasant by its rich vicinity and its glowing orchards.

Another excursion might be made from Ramleh to Akir, the Ekron of the Philistines, at the distance of perhaps six miles. It was thither that the ark was carried by the Philistines, when they triumphed over Israel—where Eli's infamous sons were killed—and after whose discomfiture and disaster old Eli himself fell back and died. It is a place of mournful memo-

ries, Ekron, and like ten thousand other scenes, it says, "Be sure your sins will find you out." But the captors of the ark were fain at last to send home their prize, and from Ekron the kine which drew the vehicle proceeded straightway to Beth-shemesh. These, and other incidents connected with those events, make this region full of interest. The true God has here asserted his supremacy over the fly-god of Ekron, and will he not yet do the same with all the gods of the nations?

Of course the traveller will proceed to Beth-shemesh, which is now known as Ain-es-shems. Here, or near this, was the ancient town, and to that place the lords of the Philistines were eager to see their ark deported, when the milch-kine, favouring the fears of the conquerors, "took the straight way to the way of Beth-shemesh, and went along the highway, lowing as they went, and turned not aside to the right hand or to the left; and the lords of the Philistines went after them unto the border of Beth-shemesh." Disease and death had been upon them from the time that the ark was in their possession. Ashdod had cried to be rid of the woe; Gath, after much suffering, did the same; Ekron would not endure it for a single day. The whole region was plague-struck by the detention of the sacred symbol, and as the traveller passes through these scenes, the topography of the district writes these events upon the mind like a pen of iron upon a rock.

But there is at least one site more to be visited in this district. It is Yalo, or Ajalon, the scene of the battle and the miracle of Joshua. It might have been seen to the right of the route from Jerusalem to Ram-

leh, lying about half-way between these two places, and between the two approaches to Jerusalem from the north-west—namely, that which has been followed here by Kuriet-el-Enab and Kolonieh, and the longer and more northern route which leads by Ludd to the capital. But in whatever way it is approached, this Yalo or Ajalon is one of the most wondrous scenes in all God's world. It appears from the Minaret or Campanile of Ramleh as an opening among the hills which environ Jerusalem on the north-west, and render the approach to that city not easy. There Joshua of old discomfited the Amorites ; there "the sun stood still in the midst of the heavens" at the bidding of a mortal man, while he was working the work of God ; there Omnipotence wrought for the accomplishment of its own purposes ; and there the sun and moon alike were obedient to the will of Him who made them. The former "hasted not to go down about a whole day ;" and as Joshua, in taking possession of Canaan for his God, had walked from city to city, the conqueror of them all, so here a mightier power appears than even that which conquers cities. Kings became confederate against the victorious invader. They determined to dispute his title to what God over all had given him, and their discomfiture would be, in effect, the taking of the whole land. Battle and pursuit, furious onset, and as furious slaughter in the flight, are the result ; and that the work may be complete, the heavens above will help the earth beneath. The sun on Gibeon, and the moon in the Valley of Ajalon, with the rush of the vanquished and the victors down the rocky pass of Beth-

horon towards the valley below, proclaim that the victory is complete. We are now traversing the scene of these events, and there we are brought into as close contact with the Omnipotent as we can well be on earth.—The yet more amazing miracle which completes the new creation in a soul, will render this marvel intelligible to those in whom God is making all things new.

And such are some of the scriptural scenes which may be visited during an excursion to Ramleh. Every hill and every valley has its story—not a vague tradition, but a portion of history for ever, when God was taking possession of the land for his people, and for an arena on which to work out his purposes on earth.

In surveying these scenes, reference has often been made to the fruits which abound in the region. The orange groves and their productions around Jaffa are famed throughout the world. The apple, the pear, and the quince, the pomegranate, the olive, the pine, the fig, the mulberry, and others, all are there. The palm also is seen at some places, and the visitor may thus become acquainted with the marvellous riches wrapt up in that single tree,—proof as it is at once of the wisdom and the goodness of the great Creator, in meeting man's wants in every land and clime. Beginning with the roots, the inquirer will find them as well adapted as a sponge to suck up every drop of water within their reach. The fibres are long, soft, or almost pulpy strings which penetrate to great depths in the soil—not horizontally, for that were useless where the surface is parched, but vertically, so as to seize upon every particle of moisture that escapes the evaporation

produced by the heat at the surface. These fibres or water-suckers are countless in number; and hence, in regions otherwise destitute of every green thing, the palm-tree, with its umbrageous tufts, may be seen fresh and flourishing amid the very sand—an emblem at once scriptural and appropriate of the man who is planted in the house of God.

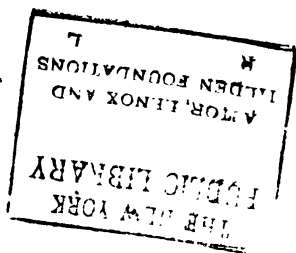
This tree of the desert, as the camel is the ship of the desert, being thus rooted and nourished, every fragment of it is turned to some economic purpose. To the sons of the wilderness it is, in some sense, a precious catholicon. The stem, tall and erect as a pillar, is employed for solid and enduring purposes, in as far as such things are contemplated by roaming Arabs at all. Its leaves furnish what is as grateful to the traveler in the East, as a home in the West—namely, a shade from the fiery sun. Its fruit is a staple article of food, and the very kernel is pounded into a kind of provender for horses and camels. Again, the foliage is twisted into baskets of various kinds and panniers of various sizes. Some of the fibres serve as a friction-brush to bathers. The juice of the palm-tree, it is well known, is made into *arrak*, and becomes a favourite beverage with some Orientals. The palm, moreover, is the symbol of triumph or of joy, as many portions of Scripture declare; and, in a sentence, no one can hear the breeze of the desert or the garden, whispering among the palm-leaves, without being reminded in many ways of the goodness of God. Its exquisite adaptation to meet the wants of man in the region where it abounds, proves that He, at least, has put all things in their right place.

There is no confusion among the works of His hand,—none, for ever, unless man had dislocated and deranged them by a revolt in Eden and rebellion ever since.

EXCURSION VIII.

BETHLEHEM.

ON this Excursion we leave the city by the Jaffa Gate again. The lower pool, Es-Sultan, and the Hill of Evil Counsel, which stands opposite to Mount Zion, and where the advice of Caiaphas, that "one man should die for the people," is alleged to have been given, are passed. The road then winds along the plain of Rephaim, where tradition, and perhaps history, places the disaster of Sennacherib and his hosts when they lay encamped against Jerusalem, where they boasted themselves against the Eternal, but were crushed by him like the moth. Nor can we forget that along this line we are most probably pursuing the very path which was followed by the wise men from the east, on their way from Herod's presence at Jerusalem to that of the greater than Herod at Bethlehem. It is true that this route also is disfigured by tales about a well at which they drank, and where the star re-appeared after being lost for a time ; but dismissing such things, as one here learns to do, and delivering up the mind to the genius of the place and its gladdening recollections, the visit ceases to be a pilgrimage,—it becomes a jubilee proces-



Church of the Nativity



BETHLEHEM

sion. War and oppression may have disfigured the scene, but the truths of the past are too deeply carved upon it to be effaced even by the ravages of war.

And yet, it were to lose much of the wisdom which may be learned in this land to ignore even its stolid traditions. To show, by one example more, how everything here is encumbered with legends, the following example, perhaps, deserves a place :—The Convent of the Cross, or, according to the Arabs, Deir-Masalābeh, lies in a valley to the west of the plain of Rephaim, and two or three miles from Jerusalem. The name of the convent is derived from the following legend :—A cypress-tree was planted on the spot by Abraham ; it was carefully watered by Lot, but at last cut down by Solomon to serve as a beam of the Temple. Yet, do what they might, the workmen could not make that beam fit any portion of the structure, and it was accordingly discarded. In due time, however, and after it had existed some two thousand years, Pontius Pilate needed a beam for the cross, and the tree which Abraham planted now served the purpose ! The hole in which that wonderful cypress once grew is still shown under the high altar. The history of its various changes is daubed in glaring colours on the walls of the convent ; and thus this tree, like the solitary and distorted tree of Judas, on the Hill of Evil Counsel, as well as others throughout the country, is made to do good service to the cause of superstition. It also shows how much the Church has to do before the truth of God can have free course in the world.

To the left of the path to Bethlehem, and on a rising ground, is the Greek convent of Mar Elias, fabulously

connected with Elijah. In Rome, when one church or convent has been favoured with some lucrative prodigy, the church or the convent in the adjoining street must get up a rival exhibition, else the offerings and the devotees who make them will all ebb away. In like manner in the Holy Land, if one sect has succeeded in appropriating such a place as Gethsemane, another must produce some rival attraction, and on some such principle, the scene where Elijah's heart was like to break, and where he felt it would be well if he could die, is transferred from Beersheba, the utmost corner of the land, to this convent of Mar Elias. It may be passed or visited at pleasure, for all that the monks have connected with it is fabulous, and nothing more. Yet from the mount one can see both Bethlehem and Jerusalem, a fact on which traveller after traveller has well and devoutly commented.

At no great distance from the convent the reputed Tomb of Rachel is found; and here tradition and Scripture appear to be as much in harmony as they are at variance at Mar Elias. By that tomb we are brought into contact with some of the remotest events of history (see Gen. xxxv. 16-20), for it is scarcely possible to escape from the conviction that this is the place where Rachel died and was buried, and where Jacob set a pillar upon her grave. A Turkish mosque, or weli, till lately occupied the site, but it is now the property of the Jews; and the whole circumstances seem to render it plain that they are really in possession of the ashes of their ancestor. The dust of a believer reposing there is as safe, and under as sure a Guardian, as if it had lain

in the Temple of Jerusalem, and He who lost "nothing" of all that the Father gave him will find it without difficulty at last.

Near this spot, at Beit Jala, travellers believe they have discovered the Zelzah, where Saul found the asses of Kish, his father ; but this, and even the burial-place of Rachel, is overshadowed by the adjacent birth-place of the Saviour—Bethlehem—the "little" among the hundreds of Judah, but great in the estimation of every believer, and great for evermore. As we approach from the Tomb of Rachel, the substantial houses, flat-roofed, or crowned with domes, begin to attract attention. Most travellers will gaze wistfully at the sight there presented, and, in the distance at least, it is inviting. The heavily buttressed walls which enclose the Church of the Nativity are prominent in the view, and thither all steps are turned, though many are aware that superstition, not religion, reigns in the place. Gardens stocked with vines, olives, and other fruit-trees, beautify the approach, and the aspect of the town, superior to many in this land, still further cheers the visitor. Bethlehem now contains about 2000 inhabitants, nearly all of whom are called Christians, though belonging to different sects or tribes. In the neighbourhood of the place, at certain seasons, there are corn fields, where it is not difficult for fancy to reproduce Boaz with his reapers, and Ruth permitted to glean.

On all sides Bethlehem is surrounded by hills and intersecting valleys. In the distance the mountains of Moab and Ammon still bound the eastward view. But tranquil as the scene appears, and crowded with

attractions, all grows pale before the Biblical associations. Among these hills David tended his father's sheep, and there he was anointed to be king of Israel (1 Sam. xvi. 13). There is the well, as is commonly believed, from which three mighty men of his host fetched water for the king at the hazard of their life (2 Sam. xxiii. 16). But there, above all, in Bethlehem Ephratah, was the prophecy fulfilled which declared that, little as it was, it was to be the home of that King whose goings forth have been of old, from everlasting (Micah v. 2). On these very plains were heard the angelic song which told of that King's birth, and in him of peace on earth and goodwill to men (Luke ii. 8-15). The stars looked down upon the scene, and if the lights of the sky sang together when the world was made, how much more when it was redeemed! After gazing on such sights no one need say much of the impressiveness of other scenes—in comparison with this they all fade away into dimness. To this point what myriads of hearts have turned! What myriads of hopes were realized here! How amazing the hour when heaven came down to earth, and heaven's King tabernacled among the sons of men! What influences have hence gone forth to roll round our poor world, elevating, purifying, saving! Blot from existence, were it possible, all the associations which are linked with Bethlehem, the birth-place of the Saviour, and what a blank would myriads feel! Our poor world would become poorer still. It would be like a moral chaos still more than it is.

On such a spot, however, the traveller will scarcely be able to restrain his wonder at the sad transmutation

which the religion of Jesus, as described in the Bible, has here undergone at the hands of men. In its native state it is simple, pure, majestic ; as it is corrupted by men, it is meretricious, gaudy, and sensuous. A few vital points or doctrines, essential as a basis for truth, and then a superstructure of holiness like that of God—behold the scriptural system. But forms, rites, superstitions, legends, sacraments added to sacraments, till there are seven instead of the simple two—these form the corrupt creed which man has perversely imposed on himself, or substituted for the truth of God. It is no longer that truth that forms our only guide, it is such a fable as that of Anthony preaching to the fishes ; or Dennis, after he was beheaded, carrying his head under his arm as if nothing strange had happened ; or a third monk transforming his cloak into a boat, and sailing in it over the sea. These, and things like these, are literally the daily food of the souls of Romish priests ; and nowhere are such legends so rife as in this Holy Land—nay, in this city, a centre of truth and of salvation. Papist and Mohammedan vie in their traditions. The Greek competes with both, and the Christian, as distinct from all the three, with the word of God for his only guide, is often compelled to sigh forth the complaint—“ Alas for man if these fables were religion !”

This is one of the priceless benefits derived by a believer as he frequents such scenes as this. It is pleasant to wander by the Jordan and mournfully trace the ruins which skirt it. It is solemn to roam along the shores of the Dead Sea, and meditate on the sights which have been witnessed, or the crimes which have been com-

mitted there. The capital and its environs, Beersheba and Mamre, the sea coast from Gaza to Beyrout, the lonely Banias, the fertile though often dreary Esdraelon, have all their lessons, their associations, and their charms. But after all, it is truth, the truth of God that must be ascendant, if man is to be happy in the Holy Land or any spot on earth. Mar that truth, as superstition does, and you put poison in the wells ; but augment the power of truth, and you impart new vital force to man. Now this is done in Palestine in a hundred ways ; it is done remarkably at Bethlehem, the birth-place of the Redeemer, and happy is that man who learns, amid all that is solemn and hoary there, more and more to prize the simple truth of God. It may be obscured, it may seem even to be entombed, but it is not dead,—at the most it only sleeps.

“ Hall, Land of Prophecy, whose glorious light
Streams on a tide that shall for ever flow,
Faith, robed with beauty, happiness, and might,
Sits on its waters, that like crystal glow.
On to the yawning chasm of the tomb
The treasured argosies of ages sweep ;—
For ever buried in its awful womb
Shall none emerge on life's eternal deep ?

Mortal! thy being's tide no ebbing knows. . . . ”

and, animated by that conviction, we are to wait in faith till the truth shall triumph.

The inhabitants of modern Bethlehem are described as restless and ungovernable, and ever ready to break forth into feuds among themselves or with their neighbours, like the Scottish clans of former years. The oppression of the Mœslem has much to do with this. Rigorous power may compel men to succumb, but it cannot

make enemies friends ; and from time to time Bethlehem has witnessed the flash and outbreak of imperious passion. Yet when the word of God has free course among the children of men, the watchword given upon these plains from heaven on the night of the nativity, or "Peace on earth," will be turned into a reality at Bethlehem, and everywhere besides.

It were wrong to turn away from this city without recalling the slaughter which Herod called the Great perpetrated there, in the hope of destroying the youthful Redeemer. It would not be easy to picture the woe, the intensified agony, to which that butchery gave rise, especially among Oriental mothers, whose affections are as fiery as their skies. True, infidelity on the one hand, through its high-priest, Voltaire, has attempted to discredit the atrocity ; and superstition on the other, by means of Papal legends and Papal festivals, has obscured these events in another form ; but the simple narrative of Scripture presents the scene in all its horrors. The character and doings of Herod in other respects, would amply bear out the inspired accounts, did they require such corroboration. He was fit for any deed, however atrocious, and his suspicion lest any rival to the throne of Judah should arise caused him repeatedly to dip his hands in blood. Though eighteen centuries and more have rolled away, it is not difficult for the traveller to fancy that he still hears the shrieks of those mothers, or sees the streets red with the blood of their little ones. Perhaps he would gladly disbelieve the narrative did it occur elsewhere than in the Scriptures, it is so degrading to the

nature which we bear in common with Herod. He was, however, nearly an unprecedented combination of the lion, the tiger, and the wolf. Bloodshed was his business, especially the blood of his own kindred. He was the Satan of this Eden, the arch-agent of him who was a murderer from the beginning.

THE CHURCH OF THE NATIVITY, BETHLEHEM.

The town of Bethlehem slopes eastward along the eminence on which it stands, and the chief structure there is the Church of the Nativity, alleged to be built over the spot where the Saviour was born. It is situated at the eastern extremity of the town, on the verge of a precipice which overhangs the valley below. It is enclosed within the walls of a convent, and suggests the idea of a fortress rather than of a residence for cloistered monks. The fabric is said to have been first erected by Helena, whose passion for such works must have been prodigious, if all legends be true. The Greeks, Latins, and Armenians are found worshipping here together, but not in harmony. One church has to serve for all, for rival claims in such a place would be too bold an impudence; but it is divided into compartments, so that each sect may occupy its own portion,—the transept, or a bit of it, for one, the choir for another, and so of the other sections of the fabric. The seamless robe is thus torn in shreds at the very spot where he who wove it himself, and wove it for his people, is alleged to have been born.

Sceptical as the traveller may be as to the legends

connected with this place, he will, perhaps, not be indisposed to surrender himself, if he can, to the suggestions which should rise unbidden near the Saviour's birth-place. The church is enriched with costly marbles, with more costly lamps, gifted in some cases by royalty, and some of them of great age and value. The pictures are faded and dim ; the pavement is worn by the feet, the knees, the very kisses of many generations of devotees ; and though much that is gaudy and tasteless may here meet the eye, and much that is truthless the ear, yet, as it was assuredly *near this* that Jesus was born, one's soul would rejoice at the thought that he were worshipped here in spirit and in truth. But with these piles of superstition, who can believe that that is common ? Some portions of the edifice are hastening to decay, and unless some distant wealth be devoted to the repair, the church where at least one king was crowned, and where myriads of devotees have adored, will crumble into ruins.

In the interior of the church the visitor is led to a spot which is deemed the holiest of all, the Grotto of the Nativity. It is approached by a stair, which is partially concealed ; and the lamps, which are ever burning there, like the Vestal fires of Rome or the sacred fire of the Persians, shed that dim, religious light, which superstition loves to affect, over the spot where the Redeemer is said to have been born. On the east side of the grotto, altars are erected—rival places of worship—for the two prevailing sects, the Greek and the Roman. On one of these an inscription in Latin, and in letters said to be of gold, tells that, " Here Jesus Christ was born

of the Virgin Mary." The inscription is on a star in silver, inserted into the altar ; and within the cave are collected as many sacred places as it is possible even for superstition to compress into such a space. The manger, an "altar of the Magi," where their gifts, we suppose, were presented, and similar figments, are there ; and if the traveller would put his own credulity to the test, never can a better opportunity occur. If he prefers the truth, we fear that he must seek it elsewhere than in the Church of the Nativity or the grotto below it.

But the whole is an imposture, and why hesitate to declare it so ? * The descent by that stair into that cave, and the whole settings of the place, proclaim that this could not be the stable where the Most High in lowliness appeared ; and we reject the whole as a legendary fiction. Passing from the tales of the monks, however, we can here rejoice in the sure conviction that, as the Bethlehem of our day is doubtless that of Christ's, an arrow-flight at the most would measure our distance from the spot where the Lord lay in the manger, as he lay three and thirty years thereafter in his tomb at Jerusalem. In the grotto, so garish as to seem grotesque, we may refuse to recognise the stable of an Eastern khan, and all the stories about it may only augment our unbelief. But not far from this spot, *at the furthest*, Mary brought forth her first-born son ; and I can now return to Jerusalem, or my home (the travel-

* "I like to feel assured that the *Church* of the Annunciation (at Nazareth), the *cave*, the *kitchen* of Mary, the *workshop* of Joseph, the *dining-table* of our Lord, . . . the *synagogue* where he read the prophet Isaiah, and the *precipice*, . . . *as now shown*, are all fabulous and apocryphal."—*The Land and the Book*.

ler may say), with a deeper meaning than ever attached to the words, "Unto you is born, . . . in the city of David, a Saviour who is Christ the Lord." I have stood near the fountain-head of mortal hope, the spot where the Deliverer who was to come out of Zion appeared, with a new star for his harbinger, and the Magi for his first adorers. We may not admire the deportment of the modern Bethlehemites, nearly all reputed Christians; but curiosity, at least, will prompt us to carry away some of their handiwork, as memorials of the place, in carved beads, models of the Holy Sepulchre, and similar articles, carved in olive wood, on the fruit of the palm, in mother of pearl, and other substances, manufactured by the people for the pilgrims. We may discard the puerilities of tradition; but, as we gaze on the town, the hills, and the valleys, amid which the Saviour was born, the joy unutterable wells up in a believer's soul. These scenes have been lit up by a heavenly radiance; they have echoed a heavenly song (Luke ii. 8-14), and should not the heart of the traveller re-echo it back to heaven?

And it is well that at Bethlehem, and elsewhere, superstition has supplied an antidote so potent against our tendencies to doat on holy places, or holy things, and to dream that emotions felt there are in their nature spiritual or true religion. No doubt, the sight of such places may help to detach us from earthly influences, and prepare us to approach that circle within which God's children dwell, just as music may soothe, or poetry elevate the mind, and so make the entrance of truth more easy, than when the soul is agitated by

the tempest of passion. But just as neither music nor poetry by itself can either make us Christians or keep us so, all the holy places are worthless in themselves to make a sinful creature holy. *That* is the work of the Spirit alone, as surely as redemption and atonement formed the work of the Son, and on that account the traveller who is wise unto salvation will join trembling with his joy at Bethlehem, at Jerusalem, and a thousand other places, lest he become the dupe of his own heart, or hold a sensuous, not a spiritual creed. There is a brilliant lamp burning by an altar. They tell me it has not been extinguished for centuries; even though I grant that the tale is true, can it either convert or edify my soul?

—That gem, some would assure me, points out the very spot where Jesus was born. Suppose the legend to be as certainly true as it is probably false, could that teach me to set my affections on things above?

—These relics, I am assured by that gross and sensuous monk, are all genuine remains of Joseph or Mary, or some other saints. Granted. But do they make my soul more holy, my heart more pure, and myself, therefore, more fit to see God? To say so were to betray an utter ignorance of the religion of Jesus. *That* his Spirit must teach, or it is never learned, and yet such baseless hopes are the stones instead of bread, the serpent instead of a fish, which superstition gives to its votaries. A Mohammedan pacha lately said, after witnessing the Protestant worship of Jerusalem: "I could worship here—there are no images;" and they must be swept away, or utterly ignored, ere the worship of God "in spirit and in truth," as he desires it to be,

can be witnessed in Palestine, in Paris, in London, or where you, my reader, now read.

It is well known that Jerome, a reputed saint, but a harsh and an angry controversialist, though a learned man, took up his abode at Bethlehem, after wandering in many lands, some 1400 years ago. There he studied the Hebrew tongue, and translated the Old Testament from it into Latin. His study and abode was a grotto, and "Jerome's cell" is accordingly shown to this day. He is known to have resided here for more than thirty years, and his name is a tower of strength to the lover of the legendary, as distinct from the historical and the true. More pleasant is it to linger on that unerring tradition which has reached us, a portion of the records of truth, which tells us of the heroic deeds of David's three heroes, who hastened, unbidden, to bring him a draught from his favourite well at Bethlehem, but which he would not taste, because it was procured at the risk of life on his account (2 Sam. xxiii.) How he was knit to his adherents, and they to him, need not be told after an incident so touching. Chieftain and follower are equally to be admired in that event.

EXCURSION IX.

SOLOMON'S POOLS AND GARDENS.

As a continuation of the previous Excursion to Bethlehem, "the house of bread," the traveller who has reached it from Jerusalem almost invariably resorts to

these reservoirs, the work of one who was both the wisest and among the most unwise of the sons of men.

On the route from Jerusalem to this district of Palestine many traces of ancient aqueducts are seen. At one or two places they supply water for the region, as they convey it into the Holy City from this neighbourhood, which abounds in springs. For about an hour's journey southward from Bethlehem, on the Hebron road, the visitor proceeds along the watershed between the Mediterranean on the west, and the Dead Sea on the east. Amid rocks and much sterility he reaches a deserted castle, and at a short distance from these, on a sloping ground, arrives at El-Burak, the Pools. They consist of three large reservoirs, partly excavated from the rock, partly built of square stones, and bearing marks of a high antiquity. They are placed one above the other on the slope, but not in a direct line, and are so arranged that the bottom of the second is higher than the surface of the lowest, and that of the third higher than the surface of the second. They are not always full—or rather, they appear never to be so. Flights of steps lead down to the water, and the interior is covered with cement where it is required.

These Pools are worthy of the splendid monarch who is believed to have caused them to be formed; but as it is impossible to convey a very correct idea of such works by mere words, the measurements of Dr. Robinson are subjoined as at once most definite and most true.

The lowest pool is 582 feet long, 207 feet wide at the

east end, and 148 at the west, while the depth at the east end is 50 feet; and of this royal work it is but truth to say, as one has said, "when full of water, it would float the largest man-of-war that ever ploughed the ocean." The middle pool is 423 feet long, 250 feet wide at the east end, and 160 at the west, its depth at the eastern extremity being 39 feet. The uppermost pool is 380 feet long, 236 feet wide at the east end, and 229 at the west; its depth is 25 feet. These figures may convey some idea of the size of these water stores, which are understood to be supplied from a concealed fountain, and so long ago as the days of Maundrell (1703), the subterranean vaults and chambers connected with the springs had been explored, and ascribed to Solomon the king. Subsequent investigations have shed additional light on these vaults and fountains. The main chamber is about fifty feet long, and five and twenty wide. There the water from surrounding springs is collected, and thence it flows onwards to the pool. Among these hidden structures the arch has been found, most probably as old as the days of Solomon, as it has also been in the substructions of the Temple at Jerusalem—thus disproving the theories of some as to the ignorance of the ancients concerning the arch in architecture. Whether the water-chamber which supplies the pools suggested to Solomon his emblem for the Church—"A spring shut up, a fountain sealed,"—it is equally easy to suppose and difficult to deny.*

But besides the Pools of Solomon, his gardens also

* See Dr. Barclay in *The City of the Great King*.

are believed to have been in this vicinity. At a short distance from the reservoirs the visitor enters Wady Urtaa, and whether it be from the force of contrast, or from intrinsic charms, it is always eulogized as one of singular attractions. Most of the people there dwell in caves like the troglodytes of old,—indeed, many of the inhabitants of modern Palestine have only holes in the earth for their home. But far other scenes have been witnessed in this valley. In this neighbourhood, as we cannot but believe, was found Etam, or Etham, where Solomon “made him gardens and orchards, and planted trees of all kinds of fruits, and made pools of water, to water therewith the wood that bringeth forth trees.” The description, at once topographically and in itself, is so applicable to this neighbourhood, that it may be deemed a settled point. Thither the sumptuous sovereign retired from time to time, perhaps to study his trees from the cedar that is in Lebanon to the hyssop on the wall. Here, perhaps, he sought relief from the cares of state and of the mighty projects which he formed; and here he may have written some of his thousand proverbs,—may we add, here he found time to repent of the unutterable folly as well as sin of his dismal lapse into idolatry? The rills of that vicinity still gladden the traveller from the West, because they remind him of his own green island and moist clime. Gardens and fields are still fertilized in Urtaa by the streams which are there, and some men, who had not much poetry in their soul, have actually felt an inspiration on the spot. We only add, what has been noticed as a strange conjunction, that some of the build-

ings constructed by Solomon in Wady Urtas, were repaired or restored by Pontius Pilate.

The name of Solomon is deeply stamped on many a scene in the East. It was a household word in Persia. It was familiar in the Great Desert in connection with Palmyra, or Tadmor in the wilderness, and much that is deemed wonderful or prodigious in those parts is linked with that prince as its author. And is he not one of the most perfect riddles which the Scriptures present to our study? To-day, displaying a knowledge more than earthly; to-morrow, he perpetrates follies almost more than man's. At one time, a devout worshipper of Jehovah; at another, he heaps god upon god at the bidding of some heathen wife. Now, he is busy collecting or composing some of the sagest utterances of wisdom; anon he commits sins such as might proclaim him to be a moral maniac. At one period, he rules his kingdom in the singular fear of God; at another, he seems an oriental sensualist—the keeper of a harem, and little more. With a wisdom far in advance of his age, he erects Tadmor as an entrepôt between the East and the West—but at the same time yields to weaknesses which are opprobrious. Rich beyond computation, and ruling unchallenged over a country ranging from the river of Egypt to the banks of the Euphrates, he yet submitted to be the victim of himself. Such was Solomon,—a monument of grace while he “walked not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor stood in the way of sinners, nor sat in the seat of the scornful,” but unstable as water when he trusted in his own heart, and became a fool. What is man, when the wisest thus

sank so far? Surely of all the lessons which can be learned in Palestine, that which is forced on our notice beside the Pools of Solomon, or at the Mount of Offence already mentioned, is one of the most profitable, though it be also one of the most humbling. He had gardens such as were unmatched in the East. In spite of all the devastations which have swept over them, the land where those gardens stood can still produce five crops every year; and yet, while nature was here also pouring its profusion into the lap of man, Solomon was ingloriously forgetting Him who gave it all. The dark idolatries of that alienated king hang like a cloud, not merely over his memory, but over his land.

To roam over this district is to grow familiar with many scenes well known in Jewish history. Proceeding to the south, a journey of a few miles brings us to Hebron. Much further on is Beersheba, with its almost primeval memories, and then the desert stretching away to the Red Sea, and to Egypt. Or nearer at hand is the hill-country of Judah, wild, rugged, and sterile. Yonder is the Frank Mountain, or Beth-Haccerem as it is now believed to be, a signal tower in ancient times for nation after nation, from the early inhabitants of the land, down to the days of the bloody Herod, who had a palace there, and from his times to those of the crusades, where Turk and Christian closed in deadly struggle for the last time. But enough. We return to Jerusalem, and pass over the legendary or historical spots which environ it on the south, laden with a conviction which is a joy for ever: We have seen

Bethlehem ; not the tawdry, and on the whole, obtrusive Church of the Nativity, but the earth, the sky, the hills and valleys, amid which the Redeemer of the lost was born.

THE FLORA AND THE FAUNA OF THE HOLY LAND.

I.—THE FLORA.

WINTER in Jerusalem is so mild that fruits and flowers which would scarcely grow in our northern clime at all, ripen there without any shelter or protection. Hoarfrost is known, and snow *does* fall at times ; but the effects are so transient that neither fruits nor vegetables perceptibly suffer,—oranges, dates, lemons, figs, pomegranates, almonds, apricots, vines, and other species of fruit, grow throughout the winter without screen or defence, in the neighbourhood of the capital.

We have just seen that the spot believed to have been of old the gardens of Solomon, is still productive beyond most others in the land. The rocks which environ the place render it, in some sort, a hot-house, and there all the fruits just mentioned grow in rank and luscious profusion. The palm, indeed, has nearly disappeared, and the few trees of that kind which are found here and there are rather like the last “flowers of the forest,” than aught that betokens increase or richness. But wherever there is anything like culture

bestowed, it is manifest to the most casual observer that that is all that is needed to restore to Palestine not a little of its former fertility. The country, for example, which still carries such an oak as the reputed one of Abraham, near Hebron—a *baluta*, or evergreen oak, twenty-six feet in girth at the ground, and with branches which cover a space ninety-three feet in diameter, cannot be an impoverished land. We know that the Mount of Olives once bore the palm in abundance, else whence did the crowd obtain their palm branches when Jesus entered Jerusalem, and they shouted Hosanna? And not less certain is it, that by proper care the palm might be restored. At all events, were the olive, the fig, the mulberry, and other trees, which now grow on Olivet, duly and industriously tended, the Mount might appear in its green beauty, as of old—it might “drop fatness” on the people once more.

Besides oranges and lemons, citrons abound in Jerusalem and the neighbourhood. Indeed, so abundant are they that their price is almost nominal, and when to these we add the more common productions of the soil, we can understand how the poverty-stricken and oppressed fellahin can wring a scanty subsistence even from the most unpromising soil. There are places around Jerusalem utterly unfit for bearing corn, owing to the rocky nature of the soil; but that often renders them just the more suitable for some other productions; and from the olive grove, outside the Damascus Gate at Jerusalem, to the luxuriant recess of Engedi, the orange groves around Joppa and elsewhere, or the Damascus mulberry at Ramleh,

we have at once all varieties of soil, and opportunities for all kinds of productions. Even the prickly pear yields a much-prized fruit in Palestine, while its spiny branches, grown to a huge size, form an impenetrable defence for the more precious orchards and their productions. The thief cannot break through—the very fire does not consume such hedges.

In different places around Jerusalem and elsewhere, attempts have been made to introduce a better style of culture than the slovenly Moslem has as yet adopted; and everywhere, we read, with success. Other causes may lead to disappointment in such undertakings, but not the climate or the soil; and the only exception to the success of these experiments is in regard to the apple. The orange groves of Joppa are about the richest in the world—literally so—for they yield the proprietor a clear profit of a tenth on all his investments. The air is loaded with the mingled odours of orange, lemon, apple, apricot, quince, plum, and China trees in blossom. Add to this the fertility of some even of the sandy plains, pronounced by an American* equal to the very best land in the Valley of the Mississippi; and all these things, seen after forty centuries of culture, make this wonder-land more wonderful still.

Among minor productions, radishes, the lettuce, and similar esculents, are rife. Cabbages, cauliflower, beans, celery, parsley, and herbs of that class are abundant; and when we remember that much of the land, miserably as it is tilled, yields three crops each year, and

* Dr. Thompson.

some spots nearly twice that number, it is easy to see how copious the supply might become had Palestine a generous government to encourage, or even to defend an industrious and a well-conditioned people in the possession of their own. At present it has neither of these. It is consequently like a fallow field, amid all its affluent productiveness, compared with what it would become were the tillage worthy of the climate.

When we speak of the flora proper, meaning thereby just flowers, the list must be long that would exhaust them all. These "silent hymns," for example, the lily of which Jesus spoke, at certain seasons, and in some neighbourhoods, give exquisite beauty to the scene, as may at once be believed when we learn that there is one little plant, as common as a weed, which bears five or six different kinds of flowers. One traveller speaks of "ten thousand thousand flowers," as spread out before him in a plain near Cæsarea, and when he passed along the Wady Dalia, near Carmel, in the month of February, "it was all glowing and blushing with an infinite number and variety of flowers, sending up incense to the skies, and offering their honeyed cups to millions of bees."* The resurrection flower is one of the most peculiar of all the productions of Palestine, and the mandrake, which, fable tells us, shrieks when torn from the earth—

"Till living mortals, hearing it, run mad,"

is common, and still produces medicinal effects, though

* The rose of Sharon and the lily are, like much besides, contested. Some reckon the mallow that rose; some promote the narcissus to that honour; some the asphodel; some the lily itself.

not those which ignorance assigns to it. In February, hyacinths, daffodils, tulips, ranunculuses, lilies, the narcissus, geraniums, poppies, anemones, and daisies, decorate many a dell or plain. Indeed, wherever there is moisture, there are flowers, so that "the stars of earth" here rival those of the sky in number. In March, sage, thyme, and similar herbs, diffuse their odours, while the fruit-bearing trees now, at the latest, spread forth all the glories of their foliage and blossoms, — the almond tree and others much earlier in the season. But hear one who has well described all that need be said in such a case.* April, according to this author, produces the white mulberry, artichokes, peas, beans, onions, cucumbers, lettuce, corn, the Arab potato, and a vegetable somewhat like the turnip, with lavender, rosemary, and the supposed rose of Sharon. In May, cucumbers continue, with tomatoes, onions, potatoes, corn, a species of small apple; and, late in the month, musk melons, water melons, walnuts, black-berries, the mulberry fig, and other fruits. In June, there is an abundance of cherries, figs, plums, damascenes, quinces, olives, almonds, bananas, pomegranates, plantains, grapes, the egg-plant, liquorice root, dandelion, and henna. In July there are peaches, grapes, pears, nectarines, melons, plums, potatoes, egg plant, prickly pear, Indian fig, pumpkins, dates, and damascenes. In August a still greater variety of fruits and vegetables are displayed; but in September there is a slight decrease. In that month cotton and hemp rapidly ripen, and the

* Hadji in Syria.

Arab corn, doura, millet, and castor-oil plant, which here grows to a tree, are found in plenty. Egyptian maize is also brought to market. But even this is by no means a complete list of the varieties of fruits, vegetables, medicinal plants, and flowers, which abound at their different seasons. "The variety," this Hadji says, "is almost endless. Indeed, so abundant are vegetables that little meat is consumed, both from choice and necessity."

Now, this goodly array amply attests the capability of the soil and the climate of the Holy Land for an almost fabulous fertility, were right means employed to educe it. At some places the water melon grows on mere sand hills, at once delicious, and exuberant in juice,—one of the richest physical gifts of the only good One to arid Palestine. Near the coast, on the plain of Sharon, a thousand boat-loads of this juicy melon are annually sent to market from places which are mere sand-heaps. The leaf is supposed to suck in the dew as the root the moisture. We have heard already of the cane-brakes by the Dead Sea,—of the oleanders which bloom there, of the matted profusion of vegetation at some places along the margin of the Jordan ; and when all this is remembered, in connection with the indescribable mismanagement and oppression which reign in the land, we need not hesitate to aver that a thousand places in Palestine could easily be made prolific as a garden. "Wheat, wheat, a very ocean of wheat," is a brief description of some of its plains. Van de Velde once pitched his tent on a parched and an arid spot. It rained—and the vegetation rushed into vigour all around,

till his tent stakes were speedily covered by the profusion. It might be even so, in many districts of the land, with rich productions, were there motives for effecting such a state of things, or protection when it was effected. But neither of these is likely to be the case till the word of God have free course there, with all its elevating, humanizing, and wisdom-giving influence, alike to the rulers and the ruled.

II.—THE FAUNA.

It will easily be believed that the savage rocks which frown over such places as Mar Saba, or the wadies which descend from the mountains east of the Jordan to that river, are tenanted by other than human inhabitants. And in truth, though no lion may now be roused, as of old, by the swellings of Jordan, and though some other animals have disappeared in consequence of the proximity of man, there are still savage beasts not a few, and many birds both of prey and of song within the Holy Land. Indeed, if the traveller be curious in zoology, much may be found there to gratify his taste. A species of leopard,* the hyena, the wild boar, the panther, the wolf, the bear, the jackal, the fox, the gazelle, the coney, and others, are still found within its borders. Some of the deep ravines, for example the Jabbok and the Arnon on the east, and still more extensively, the banks of the Leontes and Orontes in the north, afford both lairs and prey for such

* "Ibrahim, our guide, had shot a large leopard among its ruins (those of Cana) only a week previous to our visit. He had been hunting wild boar in Wady Jeffit."—*The Land and the Book*.

animals as require them. The pelican also finds a congenial solitude by the lake of Tiberias, or on the banks of the Jordan. The vulture is abundant; while in Gilead, among its groves, around Ramleh, and its olive or orange orchards, as well as in many other places of the ancient Sharon, the air is vocal with the songs of birds, of which the bulbul is the queen. Excited, perhaps, by the scene, a close observer has said of daybreak on the lake of Gennesaret,—“At first it was intensely dark, but by-and-by it began to soften low down, and far to the north. Then suddenly the note of a lark rang out, silvery and joyous, as if from the midst of the stars. In rapid succession, bird after bird rose up . . . until the whole ‘marble vault of heaven’ was vocal with invisible choristers.” Or, turning from singing birds, myriads of sparrows, followed by many hawks, appear at some places, and rock doves are often so numerous that they give a name to the place which they frequent. Then Hermon sends forth its eagles: the marshes about Lake Huleh are the retreat of flocks of waterfowl, as well as of the buffalo; indeed, the lonely and deserted country, where it is unsafe for man to dwell except as a brigand ready for battle, or a beggar whom no man need trouble, is a very nursery for animals solitary or savage, and they accordingly abound. Some are found there which have almost become unknown elsewhere.

The coney, for instance, is one of these. The animal known by that name in Scripture (Prov. xxx. 26), and long confounded with the rabbit, has been seen among the rocks above Mar Saba. It is a shy and timor-

ous creature, and needs the defence of solitude and the strength of the rocks. It finds both in abundance here, and hence it is not absolutely uncommon in the land. No attempt, however, need be made to enumerate the fauna of Judea. Regarding the scriptural names of animals, as well as of plants, and herbs, and flowers, and trees, the differences of opinion are manifold. But passing by these, and looking only at what is patent to all, we may well ask, Is there a kingdom in the world so small, yet so vast,—so insignificant, yet so mighty,—so degraded, yet so beloved,—so peeled and blighted, yet so beautiful? Not Switzerland, with all its heroic memories and unutterable physical grandeur,—not even Britain, with her power which girdles the world,—can ever influence mankind as this strip along the west bank of the Jordan, and round about Jerusalem, has done and will do. The wreck of its former occupants, still floating about our world, and trusting to find a haven in Palestine after all, is a perpetual monument, a proof that God is true. Their country is not less so. In every valley and on every height, in the depths of its seas and the recesses of its ravines, proof after proof is found that God has been there. Oh, how numerous are such foot-prints of the Creator! If “the whole creation be groaning and travailing in pain together until now” because of sin, the groans and the travail of Palestine have been the loudest and the sorest. But since He who chose it for his own, and called it Jehovah’s land, has there proved that he is true to his threats, not less true will he be found to his promises; and in that hope, they who love Zion may possess their souls in patience.

THE CRUSADES.

An account of Jerusalem would be incomplete indeed without some reference to these memorable expeditions. They enable us to estimate in a remarkable way its influence upon the minds of men. The city of the Great King may be trodden down by the Gentiles. All its glories may seem to have departed, and the abomination of desolation may reign in the holy place. But even in that dilapidated state, Jerusalem continues the centre of myriads of hearts ;—it wields an influence over the destinies of men which reminds us of some of the forth-puttings of Omnipotence. To speak of it as acting like a charm or a spell upon the hearts of men, is to say too little. It can rouse their passions ; it can animate their hopes ; it can attract and keep hold of their affections in spite of ten thousand hindrances ; it is more like a personal possession to uncounted millions throughout the world, than anything else which is not actually man's own can be.

Witness the Crusades. It had become common for superstitious crowds to resort as pilgrims to Jerusalem and the Holy Land from all corners of Christendom. Such a pilgrimage was deemed beyond all price meritorious ; the man who had made it was held to be peculiarly holy, and a visit to the earthly Jerusalem, all ruined and down-trodden as it was, seemed only a little less sacred than a visit to the Jerusalem that is above would have been. "The glorious gospel of the blessed God" was then but little known. Mortal merit was

put in the place of the finished work of Christ ; and men hurried away in thousands to secure the pardon of their sins amid exciting or romantic adventures. Now, during these pilgrimages, visitors from Europe saw how the sacred city was defiled. They could not but notice how Christians were there oppressed by the Saracens and Turks. Not a few of the pilgrims were murdered—very many of them were robbed—and all were exposed to indignity and contempt. Returning to their own lands, they spread their accounts of these things ; and there gradually arose in the minds of Western men a determination to attempt to free Jerusalem from its deep dishonour, and the Christians there from oppression or from death. The Western kingdoms rang with the outcry of outraged men ; and like a gathering storm, or a rising flood, it increased in violence and depth till the over-mastering passion threw hundreds of thousands into Syria and Palestine from all the nations of the West. Such was the power of Jerusalem and its associations.

It was in the year 1096 that the first Crusade took place. Peter Guatier, called the Hermit, a native of Amiens in Picardy, had been at Jerusalem, and, like many more, had suffered there. On his return to Europe, he began to rouse men to some sense of the indignities borne by their fellow-religionists in the Holy Land. Armies were needed to rescue them, but armies could then be raised by priestly authority. The reigning Pope, Urban II., called a Council at Piacenza, where four thousand churchmen and thirty thousand laymen assembled, and determined to rescue Jerusalem from

the hands of the Moslem. The result of that conference, and of another held at Clermont, was to send first a mob rather than an army of three hundred thousand men towards the Holy Land, most of whom perished by the way. They were followed by an army of seven hundred thousand, roused to a zeal that was fiery, by the bold harangues of Peter, and the stimulants applied by the Pope and thousands of his prelates, princes, and nobles. It seemed as if there were but one city in the world worth caring for, and that city was Jerusalem,—one spot on all the earth that was sacred, and that was the spot where the Saviour of the lost was alleged to have been crucified and entombed. Men of all classes hastened to enlist in the sacred struggle. Even women in disguise entered the service ; and though some of the crimes committed by these ardent hordes were such as should not once be named, death in the cause of the Crusades was reckoned equivalent to heaven.

Men resolved to die in sight of Jerusalem if they could do no more. Robert, Duke of Normandy ; Robert, Earl of Flanders ; Raymond, Earl of Toulouse ; Godefroy of Bouillon, Duke of Lorraine, with his brothers, Baldwin and Eustace, and a crowd of other dignitaries, pressed on, as they hoped, to deliver the reputed sepulchre of the Saviour from infidel hands. Edessa was taken in 1097 ; Antioch in 1098. In 1099 they advanced to Jerusalem, but with an army reduced by disease, slaughter, and other causes, to the twentieth part of their original number, and after a siege of forty days, they took the sacred city by storm. Godefroy was now raised to the rank of king of Jerusalem. His

power seemed to be consolidated by the great victory of Askelon ; but feuds soon arose, and, meanwhile, many returned to Europe under the impression that the grand object of the Crusade was permanently accomplished.

But a second Crusade was needed, and in 1146 multitudes proceeded to Palestine, headed by the Emperor Conrad III., and Louis VII., king of France. Their army consisted of three hundred thousand men ; and once more the roads leading to Palestine were drenched with blood, as along their dreary tracks the skeletons of former crusaders lay bleaching, unburied, and unheeded. Defeat and disaster awaited those myriads. Iconium and Damascus saw the infidel triumphant ; and after defeating Guy of Lusignan, who was the king of Jerusalem, the Sultan once more entered the Holy City as its lord in right of conquest, in the year 1187. His victory at the Horns of Hattin near the Sea of Galilee laid all the land at his feet.

A third Crusade was consequently planned. Jerusalem was too sacred, and men's hearts and sympathies were too closely knit to it, lightly to forego the cherished thought of making it Christian. A million of men from the West might already have perished in the attempt to gain or to keep the city, but their untold sufferings—their death or bondage—their bleaching bones and blighted hopes were all forgotten under the force of that impetuous passion which drove hundreds of thousands more to imperil nations by depopulation, for the sake of a city which was more than a home to each and to all. One year after Saladin had wrested Jerusalem from the Crusaders—that is, in 1188—the

third Crusade was in motion. The Emperor Frederick Barbarossa was at the head of this expedition ; and princes, dukes, prelates, barons, crowded in great numbers around him. But disaster was again encountered. The arrival of Philip II. of France, and Richard I. of England for a time restored the cause of the crusaders. But intestine divisions, discordant counsels, and a powerful enemy, now curbed or even quelled the Western heroism, and once more the Crusade was a failure ; once more the regaining of Jerusalem, so fiercely struggled for, but in vain, cost the lives alike of the crowned and of the vassal, till their number was counted by hundreds of thousands. Such was man's passionate and untamable love for the Holy City.

For even yet the ardour of the West was not quenched. A fourth Crusade was undertaken in the year 1195. It was led by the Emperor Henry VI., and victory for a time seemed to favour the crusaders. They were, indeed, well advanced in securing the grand object of their ambition—the capture and deliverance of Jerusalem. But the Emperor's death compelled them to quit the Holy Land, and the infidels were consequently left in possession of the Holy City. Their tenure seemed protracted rather than hastened by all that had occurred.

After so many disappointments, it might have been supposed that Europe would be weary, or that its ardour in the cause of Jerusalem would be cooled, if not quenched. But in the year 1198 Pope Innocent III. proclaimed a fifth Crusade. The plague, however, cut off the flower and the strength of the army which

formed it ; and although some successes were gained, this effort was further than ever from accomplishing the grand object of the crusading passion. The infidel could now laugh the Western invaders to scorn. They were no longer the resistless hordes that poured at first into the plains of Asia. Petty quarrels and personal ambition amply did the work of the Mohammedan sword ; and the fifth Crusade was conspicuous mainly as a failure. The crescent was still ascendant in Jerusalem and all the Land of Jehovah.

But the sixth Crusade in 1228 put the crusaders in possession of Jerusalem once more. The Emperor Frederick made peace with the Sultan, and secured the city by treaty. It began, however, to be harassed by a new enemy, the Tartars ; and though an English Crusade, headed by Richard, Earl of Cornwall, brother of Henry III. of England, arrived in the Holy Land, a peace was soon concluded, and these invaders re-embarked for their home.

Louis IX. of France, or St. Louis, headed the seventh Crusade. It seemed impossible to wear out the zeal of the Western devotees. For centuries the love of Jerusalem had reigned in their minds, and the leadership of such a chief as Louis was sure to rally crowds to his standard. But the enterprise was not successful. The king was defeated and taken prisoner ; and instead of the glory of a conquest, he had to bear the disgrace of a ransom. The same king also headed the eighth and last Crusade, but he died of a contagious disease while prosecuting his enterprise ; and though other princes attempted to revive the cause now drooping,

this Crusade ended in defeat or disgrace. The popes of Rome from time to time attempted to restore the former ardour. The years 1292, under Nicholas IV., and 1311, under Clement V., witnessed such endeavours, but the efforts were now spasmodic. The minds of men began to be turned to other objects than holy wars; and Jerusalem has continued from that epoch to this under Mohammedan power.

Now, no better mode can be adopted to manifest the more than spell-like power of the Holy City. Though superstition, in all these things, was only counterfeiting truth, and though multitudes of the crusaders proved by their atrocious conduct that they were ignorant of the religion of Him for whose land and sepulchre they contended to the death, their conduct and their struggles will tell to all generations how deep, how binding and resistless is the hold which Jerusalem takes and keeps of the mind of men. Blessed had it been for the crusading millions, and for all ages since the time of the Crusades, had they been as devotedly bent upon securing the Jerusalem that is above, as upon getting possession of the ruins and the long desolations of the Jerusalem that is here below. There would have been no disappointment in *that* pursuit.

It will readily be supposed that the crusaders tended largely to waste and depopulate the fair region of Palestine. Once, again and again, the fiercest storms of war raged in Jerusalem and around it; but these it is no part of our present design to record. Enough to have indicated how the city called "The Holy" has in all ages been like a home to the hearts of millions.

CONCLUSION.

Such, then, is a glimpse of some of the remarkable things to be noticed in Jerusalem, and in places not very remote from its neighbourhood. The Excursions might be indefinitely increased. Bethel might deserve a more detailed description. The site of Shiloh is not yet exactly ascertained. That of Ai is still disputed, though opinions are approximating upon these subjects; and while they are under adjudication, let the enterprising visitor go and see, and contribute his share to the final adjustment. During the past quarter of a century, perhaps hundreds of places have been identified which were unknown before. Every year the number of the undiscovered grows less; and that noble volume, the Holy Land, still to some extent unread, lies open before us, at once inviting to research and promising to reward it with many a joy. Considering the volumes, elaborate or superficial, impressive or only meant as a pastime, which are published from year to year by travellers in the East, we might suppose that the land is now exhausted or nearly so. It is so, however, no more than its own prolific soil, or its own snow-fed Jordan. From the slopes of Lebanon and Jebel-es-Sheikh, to Bethlehem, and all "the South country," there are scenes still waiting to be explored and to reward the explorer. Each new case of identification brings with it some new light to Scripture, and the wisest traveller will rejoice the most over that result, whether it be promoted by some disinterred city, or by the lonely lake.

No step, we say, can the traveller take, along the land as it lies before him, without finding some new illustration of his Bible, some fresh truth flashed into his mind, some new fulfilment of prophecy, inviting and supporting his belief. The woes under which the land is groaning, the down-trodden condition of its present occupants, the gaunt and savage men who live by plunder there, the Ishmaelite relation which tribe bears to tribe, the wretched state of the fellahin, and the blank despair which has settled down upon many hearts, all speak touchingly to the traveller's soul. When the English tongue is heard, the speaker is sometimes asked, "When are you coming to take possession of this land?" and the meaning of the question is, that the men who are peeled and oppressed look to Britain to redress their wrongs. That is no doubt trusting to a broken reed, but it speaks of woe among the Palestine peasantry. Despairing of home help, they look even to those whom they regard as infidels without a hope of paradise, as likely to rescue the land and its people from their sad degradation.

And who can doubt that all the desired results would follow yet, were right means employed to rescue Palestine in the highest sense? When an American once asked an Arab congregation whether they would let him stay in their country or send him away, were he disposed to settle among them as a teacher, "With one voice they all answered, 'We would take you on our head, we would take you into our houses, we would give you land, we would give you bread, we would give you dates, we would give you sheep, we would give

you water, we would send our children to you, we would bring our people.'” And, no doubt, *the people* would keep the promise. The rulers would interpose, but their interposition will not be for ever. That land of wonders is yet to bask in the brightness of the Saviour’s rising in some mysterious way ; and while praying that Israel may be gathered in, and Zion become a praise in the whole earth, according to the promise, he who loves the land will renew the old complaint again and again, at the sight of these dark desolations,—“O Lord, how long ?”

But is there anything in the land that can indicate a future restoration ? Hopes gather around it ; hearts turn to it. Theories are formed—some would say, dreams are dreamt—about it, all pointing to some anticipated future. Now, is there anything in the land of the book which can shed light upon these hopes or is likely to realize these wishes ?

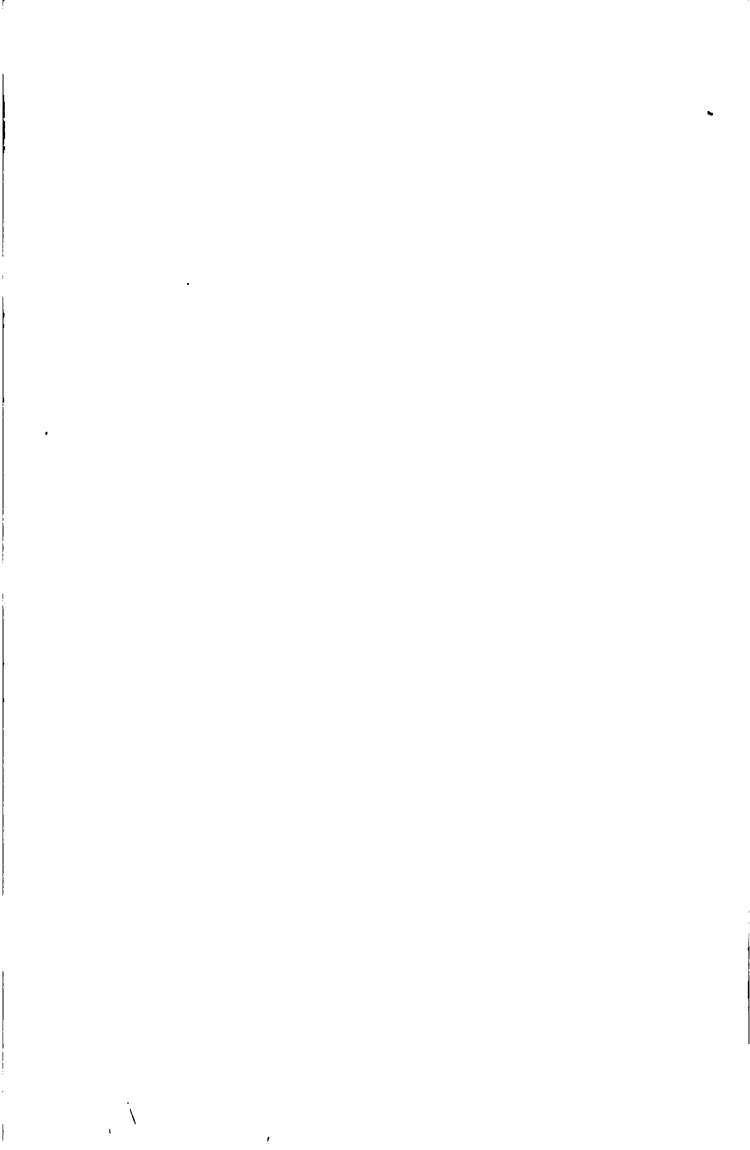
In replying, we might point again to its latent fertility, its exceeding productiveness wherever water is found, and wherever culture even of a meagre kind is employed. “It is, indeed, a somewhat remarkable fact that the ancient words which were used to characterise the country would still be accurately true,—‘A land flowing with milk and honey.’ The great flocks of sheep and goats that are on all the hills afford to the wandering tribes, and to the villagers, their chief support in *leben*, or soured milk, which they eat morning and evening ; while wild-flowers, clinging in crevices of the rocks, and blooming among utter desolateness in grand profusion, extract from that ancient soil the delicate

food of the bee, and grow as if only to assert the former richness of the Land of Promise." * But a single example more must in conclusion suffice for many.

The modern Beisan is the Bethshan of Scripture, and the Scythopolis of the Greeks. It was one of the strongest holds in the land, and its remains are among the most extensive ruins there. Copious streams surround the place, and flow down the Ghor of Beisan to the Jordan. The temples, the theatre, the tell, a bridge of extraordinary height, and other remains, speak of Roman times and Roman influence. Now, a place with such latent capabilities only waits for the stimulus of a wise and a good government to prove once more a focus of industry like some of our regions in the West. Its abundant streams, and its unstinted fertility, render it "capable (we are told) of sustaining a little nation in and of themselves." These and similar indications tell us what the land once was, and what it may yet become; and when the set time shall have arrived, the wise and the good government will be raised up, the blessing will not be withheld, and the once delightful land will become a delightful land again.

* *Tent Life in the Holy Land.*









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